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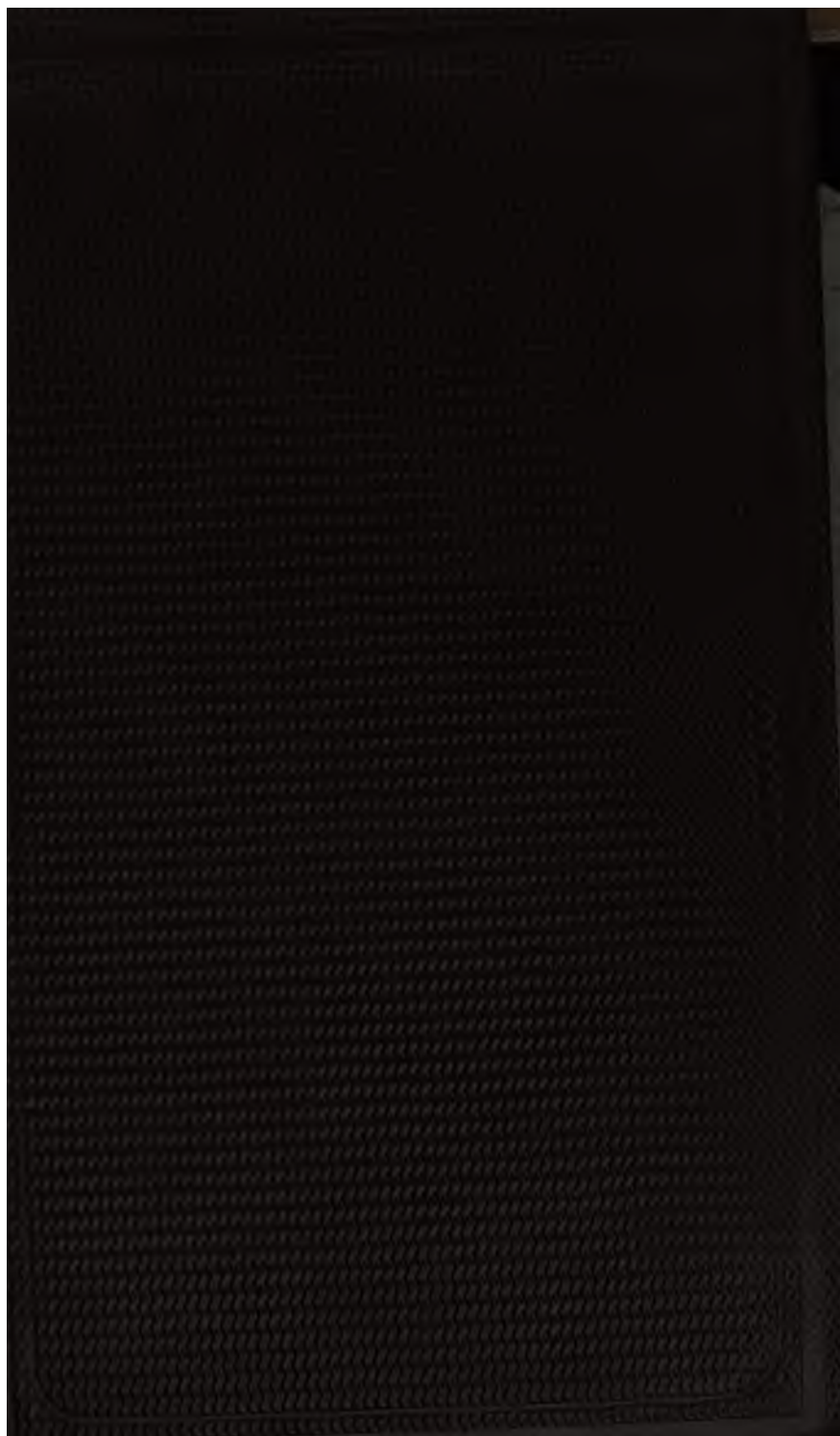
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JOHN ARNOLD.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "MATHEW PAXTON,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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JOHN ARNOLD.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST-FRUITS OF THE STRIKE.—AN ASSAULT.

THUS passed ten days, the people on strike holding daily meetings, and being in communication with the employers, though without any result, other than increased bitterness and acerbity of feeling. Hitherto there has been little violence used, save those heedless foolish acts of the younger men, for which it would be improper, indeed unjust, to blame the Union, at least directly. But threats have been used freely, and men have been constrained to leave, in very dread of what might happen, the various works in the town, and, as the angry feelings intensified, the language of the

men on strike grew more threatening, and, of course, the peaceable artisans more timid. The offending apprentices have undergone a trial before the sheriff, and been sentenced to a lengthened period of imprisonment, which has had the effect of still more arousing and deepening the animosity of the men. In Mr. Morton's factory, there is a certain quantity of work greatly wanted, and men are brought from a distance to execute it, but on the steam-boat quay and at the railway station regular guards are posted, to intercept, if they can, all the new comers, and to send them back again, paying all their expenses and giving them a bonus to go. So there is open war between the employers and the workmen. The works are in a state of siege almost, and the men picketed at the gates are as regularly relieved as the outposts of an army before a beleaguered city, are as regularly visited by inspectors, and have to give reports of what may have transpired during their watch, as the sentinels of an army before an enemy.

"I shall read you what I've heard from my brother Frank in Liverpool this morn-

ing," John said to Edward Archbold one day about the end of this time. "It would appear they have a strike there as well as us here; but it's of the founders, the moulders, and not of our branch of the trade. It has both lasted longer, been more serious, and looks more ugly than ours, for the men have mostly all gone away to London and other places. Yet there's something comical in one part of it too; I must read you that."

"Go ahead, old boy. Your brother is coming this way on his journey home, is he not?"

"Yes, to-morrow morning I may expect him, and then hey for canny Northumberland for a time! But here goes.

" ' You see, dear John, we're just as bad up here as you are down in the north. All the moulders and foundry men are out on strike. I believe it was with them a matter of wages alone at first, but it has gone much farther than that now. The employers disposed to give the increase sought for, came to a resolution to employ no man, especially Liverpool men, who did not bring a fair character from his last master,

and engage to work for a certain period, or, which is near about the same thing, to give notice a certain specified time before he left. This was adopted by all the masters in consequence of the thorough disorganisation the strike has caused, and the inconvenience to which employers have been put. But this resolution only made matters worse; not a man hardly would work on such terms, and in our work the old foreman was sent away down to your quarter some way, to engage all the men he could get. Well, the men were got without any difficulty, and to prevent the men on strike—for they are keenly on the watch, and have sentries placed over all the works—intercepting them on the quay, and getting them to turn back, old Dan had orders to bring them by railway and coach to a place some fifteen or twenty miles from Liverpool, and there omnibuses were hired to bring them into town as quietly as possible. Well, so the story goes any way,—the men, still under the charge of old Daniel, had to pass through Ormskirk, and knowing that it was famous for its gingerbread, and confident it would seem

in their own power, the scamps refused to go a step farther until each man was supplied with a liberal quantity of that spicy commodity. Of course their demands were complied with, though they had been living like fighting cocks all the way up, it seems, and they were all got safely and quietly into the foundry at night, and put into one of the large pattern rooms fitted up for them like a barrack, and all seemed likely to go well and merrily.

“‘ But it was not destined to be so for long. It appears the Glasgow Society wrote to the Liverpool men, and lo you! they set to work at once, and in spite of all the precautions taken in having the men lodged in the yard, and very careful watch kept at night, they were communicated with, and being promised all their expenses paid, and a sovereign each to boot, they became small by degrees and beautifully less, till now there is not half-a-dozen of them left, and they also will most likely soon be on the wing. You may be sure we’ve had a stirring time of it, and at the same time great fun, at least, at first, over the impudence of the scamps, and the way

they served old Daniel; you'll mind him well, I doubt not; but it's no laughing matter now, for unless some agreement is come to soon, this great contract will be broken, and some thousand tons of castings thrown on the company's hands, which aren't fit for any other purpose but that special one for which they were designed, and for the special place for which they were intended.'

"So you see, Ned," John said, when he had finished reading, "other places and other works are just as much in the mud as we are here."

"It seems so," was the answer. "I wonder how it'll all end; I wish to goodness it would soon, any way. It's the greatest bore possible, being kept at home night after night, the very time one likes best to be out in the open air; and all the womenkind of my acquaintance are so deucedly afraid, mind you, that I hardly dare go out for ten minutes. It's too bad; I wish one half of those troublesome fellows were well ducked in the Clyde."

"Well, it certainly is a great hardship," John replied, laughing; "but do you think

a ducking would wash the ill blood out of the men? I trow not; but never mind having to keep the house, you'll soon get used to it; besides, it won't do to tell me that you don't see Blue Eyes now and then."

"Oh, I don't mean that, of course; but by and by, when your own time comes, you'll know that there's no fun in being cooped up with so many eyes upon you. No, no, give me the old quiet walks again, before sitting humdrum in the house, with everybody noticing you, and smiling, and looking consciously at you, and not a bit above teasing you either. I must say again, I wish from my heart this affair were over."

"So, indeed, do I," John said, "most sincerely, both for your sake, Ned, and for the poor men's also; but they've not felt the worst yet, and their cry still is, 'No surrender!' As sure as fate, you'll see this affair take a new shape before it be long."

"As how, John? What new form can it take?"

"Why, I fancy some of us will get well

thrashed; any way that they'll try to thrash us who are at work, and then the employers will take sharper and more severe measures than they've done yet; they're bound in honour to defend the men, you know. Then I wouldn't be a bit surprised if they do what the Liverpool masters have done, and refuse to take back a man, unless he agrees to work for a certain time, and to give a certain notice before he can leave."

"And quite right too; but such a thing cuts both ways, you see; the masters will have to give a similar warning before they can discharge a man, as the men have to do before they can discharge themselves."

"Truly, and you don't think that wrong, do you? As for me, I should think it a great step in advance. Of course, if a man misconducted himself, he'd be discharged then, just as he would now, without any warning. No agreement would prevent that, I suppose; but no decent man should be paid off, cast adrift on the world at a moment's notice: that's my idea."


"Well, we'll see. Heigho, old fellow, I

wish it was all over, and things going on as of old."

"Truly, I fear it'll be some time first. You don't know about strikes, Ned. They get the masters a bad name with the men, and the men, mayhap, a worse one with the masters; it'll take long years, and a vast deal of new blood in the work, before there's anything like the old harmony and comfort, before the suspicion on both sides, each of the other, is set at rest. Then the leaders are sure to be marked men; it'll tell upon them, this strike will, in the end, more than upon any one else."

"So it should, shouldn't it? But there goes for dinner; now for a chorus, as we go out, of villanous slang, and more villanous oaths. It's to me any way one of the marvels of the day, where those youngers learn such things; the old men don't curse and swear half as bad, or half as much, as these young fellows do."

"True enough, they fancy it's manly so to do, but it'll take them all their lives to get rid of the wicked habit, if they try ever so hard, and a great many of them'll never try at all."



Before the great gate of the foundry there was a wide passage, or rather a short street, some thirty or forty yards long, which opened into a broad street. The men on strike did not venture to encroach much on this space, but in the main street, whence many other streets of a lower character diverged, and at the corners of these smaller ones, there were strong pickets posted to watch, it might be to threaten and ill-use the men, for these were the roads by which the living current from the great work flowed towards their houses; so that they had to run the gauntlet as it were for a considerable distance, and pass through or by separate groups of the discontented men, before they could reach their homes.

It was along this principal street that John and Ned had to go towards the better part of the town, in which they lived, and as very few of the men lived in that direction, they had hitherto not been so much annoyed as others of their shopmates, though they had had a fair share of it too. But this day was to make up for past indulgence, for they had not gone two score of yards along, before they came upon a body

of men, a few of whom had belonged to their own work, but the majority strangers. John and his companion were received with a shout.

“There they gang, the pock-puddins o’ Englishers ; what business ha’e they to come down here, taking the bread out o’ our mouths?”

Yet these same men had friends and acquaintances by the score in England, and many of them most likely were even then purposing to go south to seek for work ; but so infuriated were they at the time, that they seemed to be imbued with the same foolish spirit which caused the cry of Ireland for the Irish. But this cry, and the conduct of these furious Grasaig men, was not, and is not, any criterion of the usual temperament of Scottish artisans towards their southern neighbours.

“Give them their gruel, men,” some one cried. John was sure it was the same Englishman he had pointed out to Ned, who afterwards had been turned out of Mr. Morton’s presence, that black Saturday. “It’s the like of them that keep you out ; give it them well, men.”

"Let us keep firm together," John said to Ned and some of their comrades who had come up. "Hold hard there, lads, and tell me who that was that spoke."

"What ha'e ye to do wi' that?" was the answer. "Div' ye think we're tale pyets? Ye wad like tae ken, nae doubt, that ye might tell again. Na, na, my lad, nane o' that. Arena ye working in the shop whan ye should be out? Arena ye ane that's again the trade? Bannit him, bannit him, lads; let the fause pock-puddin ken he's no to ha'e a' his ain way here."

"Very good," John said very calmly, "but hold your hands for a bit, hold hard, till I tell you something. I know that fellow, and I'm ashamed to say that he calls himself an Englishman too. Well, what do you think he is? Why, I'll tell you that too. His real name is Peacham, whatever he calls himself to you now; he wrought for a time in the same shop with me in Newcastle, and was given in charge of the police for a cowardly crime. He is a blackguard, and was for eighteen months in jail for it. He is a spy, and any ill that is done in this strike he'll be the very first

to betray you, and turn evidence against you. Now is that the proper man to lead you decent Scotsmen? Shame on ye, if ye follow him, the cuckoo."

"It's a lie, it's all a lie!" was shouted in reply. "Down with them, men; it's them and the like of them that keep you out."

There was a rush on the two friends and the few others from the work who had come up, and though fearfully overmatched they had yet a much better chance than before. The peaceable men pressed forward, seeking rather to avoid the infuriated mob, but the latter intercepted them, so that they could not get on.

"This'll never do, lads," John said quietly. "We must have a clear rush for it. Mind, don't seek to injure them, but we must break through at all hazards. If they strike, why, knock them down and get on; they'll not follow us far, for the police'll be here in a little."

So they made a dash suddenly and swiftly, receiving, it is true, a volley of oaths and random blows, which latter, however, were returned with such vigorous interest that a clear passage was effected

over the prostrate bodies of the fallen; and though some lost their caps, and others had their clothes torn, and one or two had blood flowing from their faces, they suffered nothing in comparison with the assailants, and gained their point, and would now reach their homes in safety. But as it was most likely that they might be assaulted on their return, the question was what was now to be done.


"Let us all meet in the square," John said at last; "our safety is in our numbers and strength, and then we'll be able to overawe, or, if need be, to thrash the scamps; if we go singly, we'll never reach the work."

"Yes, yes, we'll be there in good time, we'll be there, belyve," the men answered.

"Now, Ned, you'll have to pass another work up the hill, or, at least, a place where there's watchers for the men at work in it. So come and take share of my dinner, and you can send up word to quiet your mother and Miss Annie. You needn't tell them all that's happened, but just as much as shows them that this was the best and safest course."

"Agreed," Ned answered. "It's very thoughtful of you, John, very indeed; but do you know I wouldn't have believed you were such a general and a warrior too; there's some of those chaps will be amissing as we go back, I fancy; why, you sent them to ground like bullocks."

This, however, showed both, pretty conclusively, that the leaders of the strike thought that the time for violent action had now come, and, as more gentle means had failed, that this, the last, might be more successful, and it showed also that John and Edward were fairly marked out as victims.



CHAPTER II.

A CAPTURE OF THE RINGLEADERS.

JOHN and Edward were soon seated at a plainer and rougher dinner than the latter would have found at home, but it was none the less substantial. These two men, who had been working diligently and zealously all the morning, were quite ready to do justice to the fare set before them, and as every thing was clean and tidy, and the food appetising, they did eat with the relish that only hunger can give. The onslaught of the mob without did not prevent them making a vigorous onslaught on the viands within, and, like men whose time was very limited, they very soon had dined.

“So I suppose we may call this the beginning of the end,” said Edward, while John was getting his desk and paper ready for him to write a note to his mother. “I

wonder what'll come next ; shall we have another row as we go back, do you think?"

"Truly, it's hard to say ; it's most likely ; but do you write now ; mind how anxious your mother and Miss Annie will be," John answered ; " we can talk afterwards."

"Oh, go ahead, old fellow ; I can write to them and talk too, quite well. I say, some of those fellows must have heads harder than the stones they fell upon, if they try to show fight as we go back ; don't you think so?"

"It is a fact that they're hard enough at all times, but as they've only got a slight taste as yet of this sort of thing, it'll just make them the more vicious. You've heard of the tiger that has once tasted human flesh, which has become a man-eater, that it always continues one, and is ten times more dangerous than one which has preyed on wild beasts alone ; so it will be with them, for a little at least, till by some vigorous stroke their power is broken, or their confidence in the leaders of the union destroyed. The hunt is up, as they used to say in old times in my country, and they'll go ahead now for a time."

"Well, we must just be prepared for them, and on the watch; but those fellows of police, what are they about, why can't they come out in force? they'd frighten them, if they did no more."

"Ay, ay; but remember these very same things may be going on in every quarter of the town, and, as they say of the army in this country, whenever a strong force is needed for any great emergency, they are on the peace establishment; the police are so here, and it is impossible for them to be everywhere. The magistrates will have to send for soldiers, I fear, before long, if this sort of thing goes on. It's a good thing that I shall go away so soon now, for I'd get into a scrape, I fancy. One can't stand much more of this, you know, so peaceably as we have done."

"No, indeed; but here's the note, how shall we send it?"

"Give it to me."

John left the room, and despatched one of his landlady's children with it. When he returned he said to Edward—

"I've been thinking, Ned, of a plan—I fancy a very good one—by which you, too,

might get out of this mess for a time. My brother Frank will be here to-morrow, you know, and on Monday we'll make a start for home. What say you to go with us?"

"Ah, impossible! I don't see how it could be done; there's many reasons against it. No, John, it is kind of you, but I don't think that I possibly could go."

"Indeed! I dare say there are many reasons, both personal and family ones, but before night if I don't show you, ay, and all your friends too, one reason that will outweigh all the others, and make them anxious that you should go, I'm greatly mistaken."

"Then, supposing I was anxious and the rest willing, what would Mr. Morton say? How would he be pleased with the loss of the services of your humble servant, so valuable as they are?"

"Why, that he'll be pleased, greatly pleased, man; the loss 'll be nothing. I don't mean that you're worth nothing to him, far from that; but at this time of year the men have a week's holiday, so that if we stay a fortnight you'd only lose one week; and then, mind, we're working to-

gether, and when I go you'd have to go to something else. Oh, there's no fear, he'll be well pleased; and I'll speak to him myself. Not a doubt you would succeed as well, or better, but I've a reason for wanting to do it. Now, just you make up your mind to go with us, if all else be suitable."

"Well, we'll see in the evening; but it's about time for us to go, isn't it? Remember, we were to meet those chaps in the square, and they'll be gathering by this time, I fancy."

"True enough. Now, Edward, if we're set upon this time, or if our comrades are, there's one thing I'm resolved on doing; I won't go into the work empty handed; I'm determined that some one or more of these fellows—the ringleaders, mind you, not the misled lads, but the misleaders—shall accompany me. I shall have my eye upon the chief one: if I can catch him, it may do some good, I fancy."

"Capital, John. Well, I don't mind if I try my hand too; let us tell the lads; who knows, we may take in a half dozen of hostages for the good behaviour of the rest."

Their comrades were gathering fast in one corner of the square as John and Edward came up, looking much cleaner and fresher than was usual with them at the dinner hour. In a few words John propounded his purpose to them, and got their hearty concurrence in it, for now the blood of these peaceable men was up; they only asserted their individual freedom in claiming the right to work when and where they pleased, and with whomsoever they could find employment; they had never insulted those who did not think with themselves, and now, after a long series of threats and reproaches, they had been assaulted and injured, and they could bear no more; the last drop made the cup run over. John enjoined them to be very cool and collected, by no means to begin a fray, but, if strife was meant, and themselves or their fellow-workmen assailed, to defend the right with all their power, and aid in the capture of some of the foremost rioters. It was soon evident that there would be another struggle; indeed, that one was going on then, when they reached the end of the wide street which led to the foundry gate, by

the appearance of a confused, turbulent mass wavering to and fro at the further end, just close by the factory entrance, and by the shouts and cries which filled the air, they could easily perceive that their comrades were being ill used.

John and his party advanced quickly, and came up with the rioters almost without being seen, and so took them in the rear. In that which before had been the place of safety, but which had now become the place of greatest danger, stood the Englishman Peachem, carefully sheltering himself behind the bolder spirits, and urging them on at the same time with cries and oaths, while, as he could get opportunity, he struck fiercely with a long staff at the heads of the poor men, who were struggling through the crowd towards the work. John saw the opportunity, and seized it in an instant; pushing forward with his little band, resolutely keeping them all close together, and as the chief ring-leaders were at the same time the greatest cowards, and so all in the rear of their disorderly troops, John and his comrades were able to completely surround Peachem

and some of his associates, and keeping fast hold of them and making a vigorous rush at the same time, they forced them through the mob and made for the open gateway; the rest of the rioters seemed paralysed for the time, and the men who had been assailed rushed into the work, whence came a ringing cheer when John, almost carrying the chief of the rioters, and Edward Archbold and his companions driving the other captives before them, entered the gate. All the workmen were now safe for the time being, and the gates were at once shut; but without the mob still raged and howled, and threw stones and brick-bats at the gate, and over the wall into the yard.

"Well done, Arnold; well done, my men," said Mr. Morton. "I'm very glad to see that you can keep your own among those unruly fellows; this conduct shall be put a stop to, however. But what shall we do with these men?"

This was in a sort of aside, which only John and one or two of his own party heard.

"I would give them in charge to the police, Sir," said John. "I will, if you please, do so on my own account and that

of my comrades. When we left the work to go to dinner we were set upon by a crowd of men, these three being the ringleaders; as we came back we found them ill-using and exciting the mob to ill-use our fellow-workmen, so that we have a good right to take them before the magistrates, having caught them in the very fact, redhanded, as our folk used to say. This man I know of old as a continual mischief-maker wherever he goes, and as a traitor to those who trust him; yet in both of these assaults he was the chief leader of the misguided men."

"I will join in that," said Edward, "in so far as the assaults of this day are concerned."

"And so will I!" "And so will I!" was echoed by the party who had come from the square.

"Thank you, my lads, thank you; but I noticed a great deal of this affair myself, and will therefore give them into custody. Go to your work, my lads: I thank you for being so firm and steadfast—you do well in being so."

The men gave another cheer, and separated to the several workshops, still very

much excited, many of them bruised, and still panting from the violence of the struggle with the mob without, but all determined to stick fast by the master, and the work which enabled them to provide so well for their wives and children.

Mr. Morton, when he had resolved on doing anything, was never either slack or slow in carrying it out. A little time was suffered to elapse in this case to permit the crowd without to disperse, but as there seemed very little likelihood of that while the leaders were in his hands, at length he despatched a messenger for the police, and with a short account of the riot which had taken place to the magistrates. The messenger was sent out by another way, for the work was in a state of siege. He had not been long gone, however, when cries from without were heard of "The police!" and the "Soldiers!" and the street, before so densely crowded, became empty as these guardians of the peace marched along. Mr. Morton gave the prisoners in charge to the officers, and some of the police being left on duty at the work, the others with the prisoners in charge marched off for prison,

where those men, so lately at the head of a mob, were left to the consolation of their own reflections throughout the bitter winter night.

"Will that settle them, think you, John?" asked Edward Archbold.

"I don't think it, but it'll make them more cautious: I don't fancy they will attempt any more open violence in the face of day, but as sure as we are here they will be more venomous and cunning at nights. Each man 'll be watched, and if a quiet chance should happen, he will be ill used; I'm convinced of it."

"You see the soldiers have been got at last: what do you think of that now?"

"Why, that it was full time; but the chief thing it shows, I fancy, is that the other works are just as badly situated as our own, and that bringing them here was the only way to keep the peace of the town."

"Perhaps so; but if they adopt the plan of secret assaults, the soldiers will be comparatively useless."

"The soldiers will frighten them from any more affairs like to-day's, and that is a great gain: we must just look out for our-

selves the best we can at night. Now don't you think I have got one argument for your going south with Frank and me that'll be more powerful with all who think and care for you, than any score that could be brought against your going with us?"

"Truly, as you say; truly, you have, John. They'll all be eager to pack me off out of this; but though you can convince them, you mayhap mayn't be able to convince me, much as I should like to go."

"Oh, I knew that; but we'll see at night, for I invite myself to go up with you, or after you, to-night; we'll see then."

"Why, you're unconscionable, old fellow. Just think how my mother and Annie would get over Christmas without me."

"To say nothing of how Ned would bear the loss of Blue Eyes' society. Nonsense, man, let them judge for themselves: if they wish you to stay here, well and good; but if they don't—ay, even somebody herself—all urge you to go with me, I'm much out of my reckoning."

"Well, as you say; we'll see."

The policemen were still on duty when the men dispersed for the night, and conse-

quently the streets near at hand were comparatively clear. John learned from one of these officers that the artisans of the other works had been assailed likewise, and that he and his comrades had become so exhausted that the soldiers had been sent for.

CHAPTER III.

JOHN'S PROPOSAL, AND WHAT WAS THOUGHT
OF IT.

JOHN ARNOLD was not long in following his friend and joining the Archbolds. Of course he found them eagerly questioning Edward, though they by no means seemed to have received very satisfactory replies. He had told them that John was the hero of the afternoon, and that they had better wait till he came and then they would be satisfied. When John entered, therefore, after he had been almost overwhelmed by the thanks of the mother and daughter for his thoughtfulness and kindness, he said,

“Come, it is your turn, now, old fellow—as indeed it has been all day—but these good people here have been teasing my life out almost about the affair we’ve been engaged in, and I’m so badgered by them that

your coming is a perfect blessing; now, there's a good fellow, just tell them the whole, will you?"

"If you please, Mr. Arnold," Mrs. Archbold said, "for we have been very much alarmed both before and since we got Edward's note."

"I should first of all," said John, "apologize for coming at all to-night, and I fancy it's too bad of Edward to turn this over to me. However, there never were two people who saw the self-same thing in exactly the same light, so by my version I may enable you to understand the affair better, and I'll do my best to do so, more especially as I have a proposition to make when it's ended."

John then proceeded to give an exact and circumstantial account of all that had happened, though in such a way as to make it appear that he had no more claim to applause than any of his comrades who had been engaged in it. But Edward had already said enough to his mother and sister to show them that, but for John's prudence, strength, and energy, the affair would most likely have turned out very differently, so

they could and did appreciate the modesty of the young man in suppressing what so greatly redounded to his own credit. John then slightly dwelt upon the treatment himself and the other men might look for now at the hands of those who were out on strike; he showed the danger of their being waylaid individually, and therefore the necessity of increased watchfulness and prudence. He spoke to eager listeners; both the mother and daughter were attentive to what he said, only interrupting him now and then by an exclamation of surprise or fear. At last when he had finished—

“You’re a pretty fellow to tell one any thing, Master Ned,” Annie said, “would you believe, John—Mr. Arnold, I mean—she continued in considerable confusion, and her face crimsoning all over, “that he only gave us the very merest and vaguest notion of what detained him, and didn’t say a word of the capture you had made. I almost wish I were a man; I should like nothing better than to have a hand in punishing such cowardly fellows;” and Annie’s dark eyes flashed.

John had felt a little queer at the half

adoption of his name, and then her correction of herself; he thought the use of the Christian name so much more kindly than the formal Mister. As for Edward, he laughed outright, and increased Annie's confusion, and still laughing and clapping his hands he cried—

“Well done, my little sister, I haven't a morsel of doubt you'd thrash any two of the cravens we seized to-day, but the other fellows strike hard, I can tell you. I wish you had seen, mother dear, the cowardly hound John carried into the work by the collar, you never saw such a picture of a pitiful scoundrel as he presented after he was placed on his own feet; he trembled all over like an aspen, I saw his very knees knocking together. As for the rest of us, we only got round the other fellows and quietly intimated to them that there was no compulsion, but go before us they must, and singularly enough they did so without much of a struggle. I don't at all doubt they would have run from you, Annie, if you had only had a switch in your hand.”

“Have done, Ned, there's a dear,” Mrs. Archbold said. “But, Mr. Arnold, will not

what you have done—the sending of these men to prison I mean—be the means of checking the others?”

“In so far as any further affrays such as to-day’s, perhaps; but the men are too fresh yet to give in, and the masters by far too much exasperated to yield to their demands. I fear we’ll have some time longer of it,—the strike I mean,—and the men who will work will have no peace from those who won’t, while it does continue.”

“What a most miserable state of affairs,” Annie said, “when decent men—you say a number of those who are out are decent men, don’t you, Mr. Arnold?—leave their work of their own free will, for what all the sensible people I have heard speak of the matter, consider of no importance; and then to seek by violence to compel others who are also as decent men, and certainly much more prudent and sensible ones, to leave their work also; it is certainly monstrous! What on earth do they expect to gain by it?”

“A loss decidedly,” cried Ned, “in the first place; but the Unionists expected if all had come out with them, or if they could

now by fair means or foul turn them out, that they should be able to dictate what terms they pleased to the employers; they won't call them masters any longer, for in such a case the men would be the masters *de facto*. They have some brains among them after all, but they take a strange way of showing them, and at a very strange time too. Let us quit this subject though, I'm sure we're all heartily sick of it now."

"Time enough, Master Ned," Annie said, "but please to remember that it is the only topic with us; you that were among the people, and acting, or it may be fighting with them, may be sick of it, but just think of us at home here trembling every time you should be home if you are only a few minutes late. We're heartily sick of it doubtless, but still like to understand what has been done or what may happen, and what good may come of it all at last."

"It is true, very true, Miss Annie," said John. "Suspense is even worse than the reality sometimes, even though that reality be in itself bad; I fear we caused you not a little extra pain to-day."

"Oh, we were anxious, very anxious, no

doubt; but as nothing like what you have been describing to us had ever happened before, not nearly so much so as we should be now," said Mrs. Archbold.

"Why it was just like Ned, mother dear," Annie said, "he never thinks of us at all, I do believe, except when he's at home here with us."

"Well, that's a good one, you little witch, I've a good mind to come and pull your ears for that saucy speech. But never mind, John, it's just what every one must expect who has to do with such saucy girls as Annie."

"I believe I must come in for my full share of blame in this case," said John, laughing at Edward's pretended anger; "but really we were both too much excited, and I may say nervous, to do anything at first. When we had got dinner over we were more composed, and then the note was sent."

"Oh, don't try to screen him, we never blame anybody for his misdeeds but himself, except sometimes, when there's somebody in question."

"Ah, yes, I know, Blue Eyes. But now," John continued, more gravely addressing

Mrs. Archbold, "I said I had a proposition to make, this is it. I am going home I think on Monday first, if the Lord will, and I think it would be a very good, and a very advisable thing, if Edward were to accompany me. It is quite clear that we were both marked out as the objects of the spite of the men before to-day, and after this day, I fear we shall run a greater risk—at least for a short time—than before; so I fancy a fortnight's absence would be very advisable merely as a matter of policy."

"Indeed, we should never have thought of such a thing. In truth, your forethought and carefulness for Edward is very kind indeed," said the mother; "and that would certainly take him out of the way of these men for a time. I don't know how to thank you, or what to say, Mr. Arnold."

"Best way is not to thank me at all, ma'am. I shall be better pleased to have his company, and to show him how a Northumberland moorland farmer keeps Christmas, than with anything I know."

"You're a real good fellow, Arnold," Ned said, clutching his hand, and giving it a squeeze which would have caused any one

who had not such iron fingers to cry out with pain; "but though greatly delighted with the offer, I cannot see how I can accept it."

Annie did not say anything at the moment; but her eyes glistened as if filled with tears. This manly fellow, with his forethought, modesty, and enthusiasm, was one of a species she had never before seen.

"Well," continued John, "I spoke to Ned about going this afternoon, and he said there were, and would be, many reasons against his going with me: and I told him then, I should give one that would outweigh them all; that is ——"

At this moment Miss Maggie Barnard entered the room, and caused, for a little while, a slight bustle and stir, during which John was silent. But they were all too much interested to dally long in the usual small talk of such a meeting. A hasty sketch of what had happened that day was given by Annie, being a faithful recapitulation of John's narrative, except in so far as he was personally concerned, for Annie blazoned him as a hero. When she had finished, John said,—

“Well, now for my one argument which is to overcome all that can be advanced, from any quarter whatsoever,”—and he looked shyly at Annie as he spoke, to which she replied by a bright glance and a smile,—“against Edward’s going to Northumberland with me: it is just this,—the affair that has happened to-day, our being assailed and specially marked out, too, for assault. Now I would like to hear Ned’s arguments against my plan, if he has any, but one,—I think I can see one clearly; but I should suppose it would tell in favour of, not against his going.”

Again another glance to Annie, answered as the former one, by a beaming look and a speaking smile. John was going ahead, as it seemed, rapidly and boldly.

But Edward was not permitted at that time to bring forth his reasons against going to Northumberland. While they were all waiting anxiously to hear him, the servant entered with a note for Edward which required immediate attention. It was from Mr. Morton, bidding him come up to his house immediately, and, if possible, to bring John with him.

"It's lucky that you are here, John; it's so much nearer. What on earth can he want with both of us, I wonder! Can you guess?"

"Truly, no: I haven't any idea. It'll be about these fellows. You forget the messenger is waiting," John said, rising at once, prompt and ready to go.

"Just so: well, I'll be ready in a minute." And Edward left the room to tell the man that they would accompany him.

"You will come back this way, Mr. Arnold?" Mrs. Archbold said. "It must be something of great consequence that causes this late summons."

"It must be, one would fancy; about the affair of this afternoon, most likely. I hope you will excuse me, ma'am, if I urge you to think carefully over what I've said of Edward's going with me. Indeed, great pleasure as it would give me and all our people at home, at any time, just now I'm sure it is the best and much the wisest course to take."

"I'm sure it is," Annie exclaimed. "We cannot thank you enough for suggesting it. Mother, dear, he must go!"

“Well, my dear, if it is the best thing, he ought to: but we’ll see, when Mr. Arnold and Edward come back.”

Edward was during this time whispering something to Maggie Barnard, who, ever since she had heard of the rioting of the day, and the proposal that Edward should go away for a time, had looked the very picture of dismay. True, she was a very young, susceptible girl; then she was very much in love with Edward Archbold, or, at least, thought herself so; and she had only heard part of John’s argument. But this blank, dismayed look gave Edward an opportunity of whispering consolation,—a very pleasant office; and he finished by exacting a promise that she should stay till he came back. As soon as this by-play was ended, the young men set out for Mr. Morton’s house.

“Well, Maggie dear, what do you think of all this?” Annie said, when they were alone. “Isn’t it nice to live continually in a state of fear, and to fancy, with every ring at the bell at or about Ned’s hours, that it’s a message to tell us something’s wrong? What do you think of it? Pleasant, is it not?”

"Oh, I can't think at all! it's so dreadful, it makes me quite shudder. Yet Edward seems as gay as ever. And is it not likely that what they did to-day may give a check to those rough men?"

"Mr. Arnold does not seem to think so, dear," Mrs. Archbold said. "We have great reason to be thankful to him, under God, for what he has done and what he proposes to do. He seems to me to be one of the most unselfish persons I ever saw or knew."

"Both you and Ned are right, mother, dear. I don't believe there is a single grain of selfishness about John Arnold. Oh! laugh as you like, Maggie Barnard: I'll call him John; it sounds kindlier, I fancy. I wish you had only heard him when he was telling us about these things; you never saw a young maiden more modest. Then Ned has always said he was such a good fellow. Now see how it's proved. Ninety-nine out of every hundred would just have let Ned run the risk of being injured to-day; but he kept him, and shared his dinner with him. Ninety-nine out of a hundred going away as he is, would never for an instant

have thought how good it would be if their neighbour and fellow-worker could go with them; but, you see, John did the first, and he's resolved, if possible, to do the second, too."

"But why should Edward go? Could he not be quite as well and as safe here?" Maggie asked. "Surely, notwithstanding what has happened, no one would injure him if alone?"

"Why, it's not so many hours since they did try; and but for John having kept him from coming up this length, there is no telling what might have happened," Annie answered warmly. "When Ned came in at night, he had passed, he said, through another mob besieging the gate of another Work; and if it had been daylight, he would have been set upon, to a certainty, but in the dark he managed to get quietly through the midst of them."

"It is very dreadful, and very tantalizing, too, after all the pleasure we promised ourselves at Christmas," Maggie answered. "But Ned should do what he thinks best and safest, any way."

"Yes," Mrs. Archbold said, "Edward has

never been from home one Christmas since he was born. It has always been a family day with us, and if he is absent this time it will give me not a little pain; but what is that, and what are all these things, compared to the dear boy's safety? If I can prevail upon him, he shall go away."

"Quite right, mother dear! Be sure it's for the best, or John wouldn't have advised it," Annie said. "Then, Maggie, it's not to be for long; and he'll come back, please God, full of the people, the habits, and the country of Northumberland. By the bye, that minds me, mother, John has a brother coming from Liverpool to go home with him; you must ask him to come and see us when he is here. And I mean to advise him to bring a sister he has told me a great deal about, and whom he loves very dearly, back here, to keep house for him."

The mention of this sister seemed to make Maggie Barnard still more discontented; and certain it is that she looked with even a less favourable eye than before on this proposed jaunt. Annie felt inclined to laugh, at first, at the pouting face of the pretty girl, and then to be angry with her;

but on the whole, so far as she had seen, Maggie was a sweet-tempered girl, and Annie thought it was, perhaps, natural that at first she should be greatly disappointed that during the coming holidays her beau should be away. Thus talking and working the girls busied themselves, and wiled away the time till the young men should return; while Mrs. Archbold now and again read little bits of news to them from a London paper, and sometimes added her word to the conversation the girls still carried on over their work.

CHAPTER IV.

A PRECOGNITION AND AN ANONYMOUS
LETTER.

WHILE the people at home were thus engaged, eagerly discussing the advisability of Edward going with John to Northumberland, the young men were hastening to the west end of the town to Mr. Morton's. There was little perceptible difference in the appearance of the streets from their usual aspect at that hour. Some of the shops were closing, others were yet blazing with gas-light, and the shopkeepers busy behind their counters. Here and there were groups of working men, according to their usual custom, standing at the corners of the streets and lanes that intersected the main thoroughfare; and the young men could hear as they passed, from the conversation of these groups, that the day had been

marked by disorderly riotous proceedings in more quarters of the town, and at other works besides their own. Such words as 'knobs' and the 'men on strike' they ever and anon heard as they went on, showing how the different groups felt towards the misled men. Sometimes the tone was of pity or condemnation, sometimes, and more frequently, of approval of the strike at least, if not of the violence which those formerly peaceable men had manifested in the rioting of the day. The police—and this was the most marked difference in the appearance of things without—were patrolling the streets two and two together, armed with cutlasses, a sight which neither of the young men had ever seen before, and now and again the uniform of an unarmed soldier could be detected, but these were few and far between. The military were kept out of sight, but ready to spring to arms at a moment's notice. Various parties of the men on strike, perhaps of those who had taken part in the day's disturbances, could be discerned hastening towards the lower parts of the town in a very skulking sort of way, as if not at all well assured of

their personal safety, and anxious to escape notice.

"These lads are for some great meeting, Ned," John said. "They've been startled by what has happened, and now they'll have to choose new leaders, and most likely new tactics. Take my word for it, that's where they're going."

"Most likely, they all go the same way anyhow. Well, the morning will tell us what they mean to do next, I fancy."

In a little while they were ushered into Mr. Morton's presence. He was seated at a table, on which were decanters of wine, opposite to him was another gentleman, and they seemed as if after dinner they had come into this room for business of some kind. The room was a very plain one, and appeared half a business room, half library; there were a great many books in cases fitted round two of its sides, and on the walls of the others were engravings of steam vessels, built or engined by the firm, and drawings of machines of nearly every possible kind, and intended for every possible purpose. It was Mr. Morton's study in fact, where very many of his ideas and

calculations were wrought out, and which was indeed a fitting place for the pictures of his skill and enterprise.

"I am glad you have come so quickly, and that Arnold is with you, Edward," Mr. Morton said; "sit down, I wish to have some conversation with you. Mr. Fiscal, these are the young men I have been telling you about, John Arnold, and Edward Archbold."

"Um, very good."

Mr. Fiscal was a well known man in Grasaig, and his very name a terror to the evil-doers thereof. He was a lawyer and the public prosecutor, and the whole confraternity of thieves, cheats, and unruly persons stood far more in awe of him than of any one else in the town. He was so acute, so thoroughly skilled in all the mysteries of attempted alibis, and false swearing in general, that those who, by such means, sought to screen a companion, or even thought of it, shuddered, as they thought of the searching cross-examination to which he was certain to subject them. He was in person about the middle size, but very spare and slight, which gave him

the appearance of being tall. His countenance gave the young men a very good idea of his character; it was thin and pale, and the features, of no order, properly speaking—but a sort of mixture of all—suggested at once great firmness and decision, with more than an ordinary share of acuteness, and his clear, keen grey eyes seemed to read the very thoughts of the heart. Both John and Edward knew him by report, but they had never seen him before, and consequently they felt a little awed in his presence, though they at once knew by it what they had been summoned for. Mr. Fiscal was moreover in all legal matters a man of few words, and experience had long ago taught him to look with some suspicion on witnesses, whether they were for or against his clients, who were long-winded in their answers. The model witnesses with him were those who were most concise, and he would rather have a plain yes or no than a paraphrase of either. It is very likely, for this quality at least as a chief reason, that magistrates of police generally prefer the evidence of police constables to that of other witnesses.

"Mr. Fiscal wished to see you both about the affair of to-day; the leaders in it will be brought up to-morrow, and your evidence is required, as well as that of the other men who were with you, and saw or took part in the whole matter," Mr. Morton said.

"Very good, Sir," John answered, "we can easily tell all we saw, both Edward and myself."

"Um—well: now just tell me as clearly and as shortly as you can all that they did and all that you saw done; all that happened, in fact," Mr. Fiscal said.

Whereupon John began, and in a very clear succinct narrative told all that had come to pass; every circumstance that his own logical mind and sound sense showed him might be of importance was detailed fully, and yet there did not seem as if one superfluous word was used. The lawyer rubbed his hands, chuckled, made grotesque faces at Mr. Morton which almost upset his gravity, well as he was accustomed to such pantomime whenever Mr. Fiscal was pleased, and appeared thoroughly satisfied with the witness and his story.

Edward followed John's example; was short and pithy also; his evidence was just a recapitulation, save and except that he showed John as the real capturer of the rioters, and also how he had protected himself after the first assault. A half-hour sufficed for the two narratives, of which the lawyer took some notes as they went on; and when they had both finished he began to question first the one and then the other on a variety of points, and especially what might be the cause of the special enmity of the Unionists against themselves,—what they knew of the assailants,—and a multitude of other questions, which proved how thoroughly he had attended to what they had said. When he had finished his questions he said —

“Now you come, both of you, to my office in the morning at nine, and bring your comrades with you; I must precognosce them all, and then you'll have to go to court. I'm finished now, Morton.”

“So am not I,” said that gentleman. “Here, Arnold, what do you thing of that? read it aloud.”

John in great perplexity took a letter,

which Mr. Morton handed to him, while Edward looked on in some astonishment, as to what this new affair could be. John first glanced over the paper, and his cheek flushed and his eyes flashed as he puzzled through it. It was a vile scrawl without a proper signature, denouncing himself and Edward, and declaring that the vengeance of the Union men would speedily overtake them, unless they left the work, or if they appeared to bear witness against Peachem and his fellows; and also threatening Mr. Morton for still keeping them and the other non-Unionists in employment, and hinting at such a revenge as had never before been heard of in Grasaig. When John finished he looked on Edward for a moment in blank astonishment, and addressing Mr. Morton he said—

“I can’t understand this at all, Sir, it’s wholesale threatening truly, and all on account of myself I fear, though Edward is mentioned also. If you think it would tend to peace, and to the greater security of the men at work, and the work itself, if I went away, I will leave to-morrow for good.”

"No, not at all, by no means, Arnold; it is one of their—well, diabolical schemes; they would consider it the first step to a complete victory. No, no, but I thought it right that you both should know how they stand affected towards you."

"Oh, we knew that of old, Sir." John told of the visit of Thompson and Blair before the strike, only not mentioning their names; "but it is not so much for myself I care, I fear them not let them do their worst, but for the work and the quiet men. It would be nothing for me to go away, but a dreadful thing to know that so many decent men were put out of bread because of me."

"Good, very good," nodded the lawyer, making still more extraordinary grimaces.

"It is certainly praiseworthy on your part, Arnold, but letters such as that ought only to make honest men more firm. Your going away entirely would not at all mend matters. The men who are out would only become more confident and daring, the men at work more fearful. No, no, you shan't leave."

“ Sir, you know I go in the beginning of the week, if the Lord will, home for a few days. Now that will test the men, so far as I’m concerned; and I have been suggesting to Edward, that it might be well, if you would permit and he were willing, that he should go with me. I think it would be the safest and wisest plan for us both, if you pleased to consent.”

“ Well, that’s a good idea, Morton,” Mr. Fiscal said; “ agree by all means; we’ll dispose of these fellows to-morrow.”

Mr. Morton likewise seemed pleased with the plan, and was agreeable that Edward should go; but Edward was not altogether prepared for being disposed of in this summary way, although the previous arguments of John, and the threats of the mysterious letter, had very nearly decided him. Edward had hardly spoken at all except in answer to questions, John being clearly recognised as the chief, and Edward felt no hesitation in owning that he was so. At last he said —

“ But it may be, Sir, that I don’t wish to leave Grasaig just now, that I may want to spend my Christmas at home, however



grateful I feel for the kindness of John here."

"Pooh, pooh, Edward, we can judge more clearly than you can," Mr. Morton said laughing. "What special reason, now, have you for remaining at home? That you have always been at home at this season?—a very good reason truly, but could you say that was the only one? Ah, your safety, personally, and the peace and comfort of your mother and sister must be your chief care just now. So you should—I had almost said you must—go with Arnold, provided always that Mr. Fiscal don't want you."

Edward acquiesced—at least he was silent, though the colour flushed over his face. He had any way the permission to go, whether he went or not. Suddenly Mr. Fiscal asked—

"This Peachem was convicted before, you say?"

"Yes," John answered, "of a cowardly assault on a young girl."

"At what time and where?"

"About three years ago, at the Borough sessions of Newcastle-on-Tyne; I am ready

to swear he's the man, and my brother, who will be here to-morrow, could do the same."

"Very good; now, Morton, I've done."

"Well now," the master said, "you had better take the men who were with you to-day away to breakfast an hour earlier than usual, and then all come to Mr. Fiscal's office at nine; I will meet you there then. Give this to Mr. Thom, Arnold; it will let him know why you are to go so early."

Mr. Morton wrote a few lines, and handed them to John, and then Edward and he went away. It was not long until they were once more beside Mrs. Archbold's comfortable fireside, with the ladies eagerly desirous to hear what had caused the unusual summons. After a few words of explanation John said—

"I found a capital helper in a letter which Mr. Morton had received to-day, denouncing us two, and threatening vengeance not on us only, but on him, if he did not turn us away. Is it not monstrous! So I mentioned what I proposed before to you, Ma'am, and both the lawyer and Mr.

Morton thought it would be the very best thing possible, for Edward to go away with me."

"Well, Edward dear, what do you say now?" Mrs. Archbold asked, greatly terrified, and yet greatly relieved. "Is it to go with our friend, as we all wish, or to stay at home and run all risks?"

"Oh, Ned will never be so foolish surely," Annie said; "if he does not care for himself at least you will care for us, Ned, won't you? We shall be miserable if you don't go, indeed we shall."

Edward was still silent; he was looking into Maggie's eyes, to read there what she thought, and they as plainly as possible spoke of disappointment, and he seemed almost fancied to say, 'Don't go;' while on her pretty features and pouting lips there was an appearance of discontent such as he had never seen before. Edward felt puzzled what to do. It is a dreadful thing to a young bold-spirited man to be reckoned a coward by any one, but far more so by one that we highly esteem or love. Edward had perhaps such a fear before his eyes, and still hesitated.

"What think you, Maggie?" Annie asked; "tell that obstinate fellow what you'll think of his conduct, if he stays here to be ill-treated, perhaps murdered."

"Don't now, Annie," Edward said at last, "that is coming it too strong, you know; there's no murder in the question just yet, and I don't fancy that there will be either; but really what do you think, Maggie?"

Maggie had started violently at the word "murdered," though the discontented expression still hovered over her face, because all her schemes for a merry Christmas seemed likely to be broken up. There was far more of selfishness about her little heart than any of them were aware of; here was a sort of touchstone which partly manifested this feature of her character to Mrs. Archbold and Annie, and they waited gravely for her answer. It is always a trial of the severest kind, when one we esteem is tried and found wanting, or, as in a case like this, even hesitating when prompt decision is required; and as the little group looked on that pretty discontented face, they felt positively unhappy;

all but Edward, who could see no fault in it at all.

"What say you, Maggie?" he asked again. "Am I to stay and run all risks—don't think I shut my eyes to the fact that there are risks—or shall I go away with John for a time, and so most likely escape them altogether?"

"I don't know how to advise; I am not a good counsellor; your mother, everybody, thinks it the best. Yes, perhaps you had better go."

But this was said so unwillingly, and almost ungraciously, that Edward sighed, and partly turned away; while the eyes of his sister flashed with a strange light, and the mother looked more grave, and said—

"Edward, my boy, no *one*," she emphasized the word, "could more desire that you should be at home with us at this festival time than Annie and I, but though greatly disappointed, your good, your safety even it might be, is in question, and we can make up our minds, not only to the disappointment, but really shall feel glad if you go."

"Yes, yes, Ned," said Annie, "mother's

right, we shall feel glad if you do go away till things settle down again."

"Well, John, did you ever see the like of this; take care, old fellow, you see I haven't a morsel of will of my own at all; I suppose I must give in with what grace I may. There's a verse of a Scottish song I've heard somewhere that fits this well, I fancy—

"Nocht's to be gain'd at woman's han'
Unless ye gie her a' the plea."

That just caps my case to a nicety. Well, old fellow, I'll go because I must; so now all you've got to do is to say the word forward, and I'm with you."

"Very sensible of you, master Ned," Annie said much more cheerfully than before. "If it had been me, I should have agreed long ago; but you were always such a provoking fellow."

"I wish much that you were going too," John said,—“that we could make a large party of it: however, this season is none of the fittest for a journey; perhaps we may have better luck another time;”—and again John's eyes sought furtively to meet Annie's, and, as they met, the bright flush that


covered her cheek was almost as brightly reflected from his, and his heart beat more rapidly than usual.

They settled down now for a little, more collectedly; and then Miss Barnard rose to go, and the others got ready to accompany her. Once in the street, they soon fell into their usual order; and then Edward was forced to go over the whole matter again with Maggie, and at last parted with her with a strange feeling of pain at his heart. Annie and John got on much better; and before they separated she had exacted a promise that, if possible, he would bring Marion to Grasaig. He thought himself that a change of place and scene might remove her apparent despondency, and benefit her in many ways. Having also promised to bring his brother Frank to see them, they parted; and John returned to his lodgings, which this night, more than ever before, seemed dingy, dull, and solitary, and so wholly unlike a home.

CHAPTER V.


ARRIVAL OF FRANK AT GRASAIG.—TRIAL OF
THE RIOTERS.

As arranged the previous evening, punctually at the hour appointed John left the foundry with the men who were to go to the Procurator Fiscal's office. The videttes or sentinels of the Unionists were just taking their places before the entrance as the men left the work, and at first seemed very much astonished at the unusual sight. Had the men been carrying their tools or going in the direction of the harbour, had there indeed been then any vessels either fitting out or undergoing repair, this might have been looked upon as a thing of course; but these men dispersed towards their own homes. John saw that a messenger was despatched by the spies in great haste, while they impotently groaned and howled a salutation



to the knobs, as he and his party passed. It was however far too early for the leaders who still remained to have assembled as yet, too early for, or rather the time was so unusual; there was no fear of interruption just then; besides, he well knew that at the police court that day would the battle be fought, and then those of the Unionists who could come with safety were sure to be present.

John had made inquiries about the arrival of the steamer from Liverpool, and found that if he were not detained by Mr. Fiscal, he might welcome Frank before the court would open, and he had little doubt that he should do so. It may well be imagined that John had both his head and his hands full for that day, ay and perhaps his heart full also. He felt he could hardly tell how, something queerly strange and yet pleasant, which caused an extra pulsation to his heart, and an extra glow upon his face every time he thought, every time the image of Annie Archbold rose up before his imagination, and that was pretty often. It would be too much to say, perhaps, that that was oftener than he wished, but it certainly



was oftener than was good either for his studies or his peculiar work, for just then he had an idea of an improvement in the machine in the construction of which Edward and himself were engaged, which he had resolved to work out. But John is at breakfast, making no small figure, though he be alone; it might be supposed that all the cares and thoughts, and the things that required to be done, would have had some influence on his appetite; perhaps they had in a slight degree, but not in the ordinary hackneyed way they are said to have it. John was a Northumbrian, — that should put such an idea altogether beyond doubt, for his countrymen for such occasions “are ready, aye ready.”

Punctually at the hour appointed the party were at the office of Mr. Fiscal, where Mr. Morton was waiting. The men were not unwilling to give their evidence, but afraid that they should be specially marked for doing so. One and all of them were determined that they would not bear witness against any of their old companions and neighbours, and it was fortunate that not one of the men in custody had ever belonged

to the work. Any of them had it in his power to denounce by name old fellow-workmen they had seen among the rioters, but they would have considered it in the highest degree dishonourable to say a word about them, yet in regard to the ringleaders they had no such feelings. Thus, though they entered Mr. Fiscal's office anxious as to what might be asked of them, they were speedily re-assured, seeing that the questions had reference only to the men who were to be examined before the court. A little while sufficed for the further questions Mr. Fiscal had to put to John and Ned, a few more notes were taken, and then they were dismissed to be in the court within an hour. They both hastened down to meet the boat. It was possible they might not be successful,—be either too late or too soon,—but so powerful were the steamers and so well managed on that route, that their arrival could be almost as confidently calculated and depended on as the coming in of the mail. And so it proved. Both the young men had the idea that the Unionists would be abroad, and that some annoyance might be offered to them, but it was so in

only a very slight degree; the men were otherwise employed. Various parties of the union men were on duty watching the different works; and gathering about the entrance of the court-house were a greater number; so that except the stated watch on the landing quay, they only saw two or three men whom they knew to be out on strike. What a dreadful picture was this, where the majority of a great trade were in a state of direct antagonism towards both their employers, and towards their own more rational brethren; where they not only kept close watch upon the factories to see who did go to work, but also had every entrance to the town blockaded, where the sentinels were in readiness, and prepared to stop every man who appeared to be an engineer, and by persuasions, or if these would not do, by intimidations and threats of bodily violence and injury, attempt to turn them back! Where the grand principles of religion and morality, as well as the lesser ones of policy and expediency, were openly disregarded! and all for what? Not that the trade, as a trade, had real grievances to be redressed; but that certain restrictions

should be put on the lawful authority of the masters, and an equality ordained among the artisans which was as unnatural as it was impolitic, and hurtful to the clever craftsman. It is all very well to shout for equality in very many cases of general privilege, personal freedom, equal right; but equality such as Trade Unions desired then, and desire many of them still, is unnatural. When all artisans of any one trade are equally skilled, equally thoughtful, when they have minds equally talented, then, and not till then, should there be equality of remuneration, and any attempt to compel a regular rule for all, without regard to the diversity of the gifts of each individual, is as great a hardship and as unjust to the men themselves as to the employers.

The steamer was just making fast to the quay as John and Edward reached it. They then perceived that the Unionists were very strictly on the watch, both of the passengers who had collected on the gangway and of themselves, as if they suspected that their errand was to meet and conduct to the work men expected from Liverpool, and so partly

deprive them of the opportunity of cajoling or frightening them back again. However, in a few minutes they might be satisfied on that head, at least so far as numbers were concerned, for Frank speedily leaped ashore. Frank neither in dress nor personal appearance looked like an engineer, he seemed more refined, more gentleman-like, than artisans coming off a night's voyage usually are, and so was the small and very unartisan-looking portmanteau in his hand; and the watchers, who would have dared a great deal to intercept one of the trade, stood quietly by, while John welcomed his brother, and introduced him to Edward Archbold. The welcome was very simple, hearty, and sincere.

"Frank, my dear fellow, I'm so glad to see you again," John said grasping with both hands the single one his brother had disengaged.

"Ah, John lad, no better pleased than I am to be alongside of you once more," was the reply. "I hardly expected to meet you though at this hour, and fancied I should have had to seek you out the best way I could."

"I'll tell you by and bye how it came about that we could come here; but, Edward, this is my brother Frank; this is Mr. Archbold, Frank," John said.

They shook hands heartily, and then walked up the quay together, still watched by the union videttes, as if they grudged that these "knobs" should pass so easily.

"We must make haste," John said to his brother, "Edward and I have to be at the police court at ten o'clock, our trade troubles have taken a definite form, and we are witnesses, and I should almost say complainers in a case that is to be heard there to-day."

"So there's no hope of an end to the madness of the union men yet?" Frank asked. "We'd got over our little bit of an affair in Liverpool before I left. At least the masters had got men, how long they may stay with them is another matter."

"We were in the thick of a fight with them yesterday," Edward said. "All our men were set upon more or less, but we secured five or six of their leaders. It is

they who are to be brought up to-day," and Edward turned as if going alone to the court-house.

"Come along, Edward, don't leave us, don't go away. You've not breakfasted have you, Frank?"

"Oh, but I have though," Frank answered, "I'm as fresh as possible. I had a good night's sleep, and a good breakfast, too, on board; so if I were rid of this portmanteau I'd go with you at once."

"Here we are then, and you'll just have time to brush yourself up a bit before we go."

John could not help admiring his brother all the way from the quay. Though they had only been a few months separated, it seemed as if a far greater change had come over Frank than he had anticipated. Frank looked more refined and gentleman-like, and he had more the air of a man of education than he had had before. He had ever been gentle and intellectual in look, and now his whole air, manner, and speech made it apparent that his companions for the last few months had not been wholly

craftsmen. His countenance was perhaps paler than usual, more

“Sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought”

than in former times, but still telling of vigorous health. We have already said that he was like his brother,—Edward Archbold thought very like indeed,—the brothers themselves were less conscious of this resemblance than other people. But Frank’s face had become so much more gentle and soft, that the likeness was rather that of a sister to a brother than what generally exists between two individuals of the same sex.

“Well now, if you’re ready, Frank, we’ll go,” said John. “He’ll be an addition to our strength, Edward,” he continued, laughing. “I don’t fear but he could strike hard in a good cause, though he does look so quiet and gentle.”

“I should fancy not,” Edward responded. “But there is little reason to fear any thing that’ll need striking to-day, surely. No, no, old fellow, they’ll be all on their P’s and Q’s to-day, depend. We’ll find

them in force in the court when we get there."

"Very likely, and out of court too; but I expected that. Don't you think they may fancy it is quite as much worth while to frighten the witnesses, or to get them out of the way if they can, as do what they did yesterday. We'll have a squeeze for it, depend upon it, before we get in."

"Won't the police be there?" Frank asked. "Oh, yes, be sure the authorities will take care of that. You'll get in easily enough. Getting out may be a harder matter though, if the sentence be a heavy one."

"We'll get in after a good squeeze, I have no manner of doubt. Well, we're not babies, that's one comfort."

There was in truth a considerable crowd about the entrance of the court-house, almost filling the street indeed. It is true this crowd was not composed of those who had taken part in the riot of yesterday. With them discretion seemed to be the better part of valour, and they kept away, lest they might be recognised and handed into the dock along with the prisoners. In-

deed many of them, terror-stricken by the apprehension of the ringleaders, had left the town long ere this. But a good deal of the turbulent spirit was left, though the rashest men had decamped; for John and his party, as they came up to the crowd, were saluted with groans and hisses, but no attempt was made to annoy them in any other way, save cries of "Bannit them, bannit them," which came from some few in the rear. The police were present in force, and as these cries arose they glanced carefully round to discover those who uttered them; but the sight of a policeman looking in the direction of the groaners had the effect of making them silent at once, nor could the invitations, very pressing indeed, of a police serjeant induce even one to come forward and give a specimen of his powers in front. They passed through the crowd, therefore, without the anticipated squeeze; and John, having got Frank safely introduced into the court, was then with his companions shown into the witness-room to wait the coming on of the case.

They had not long to wait. The cases to be disposed of first were the usual morning

ones of drunk and disorderlies, which were soon got over, and then came on the great case of the day. There never had been one of precisely the like kind tried in Grasaig before. Hence the court was crowded to suffocation in every corner with employers, and men whom formerly they had employed. Mr. Fiscal was sitting at a low table between the bench and the dock, with bundles of papers before him, and the proceedings commenced. The rioters were represented by two lawyers, but from the very first it seemed as if they felt, and had made up their minds that they could do little or nothing, the evidence of Mr. Morton and his men was so direct, strong, and conclusive. Mr. Morton was first examined, then John, whose evidence Mr. Fiscal seemed specially to dwell upon, and the other men; and after a long and patient examination, the leaders of the rioters were summarily found guilty, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment as they seemed to be more or less implicated. An attempt was made by Mr. Fiscal to get evidence as to others who might have been engaged in the tumult, but it was utterly

unavailing, neither John, Edward, nor one of the men would become the accuser of their brethren, and therefore they would not say that they knew any other person who had taken part in the assault. The sentence was heard with consternation by the crowd of working men within the court, and when it was communicated to those who were without, there was a universal chorus of groans and yells, execrations and denunciations of magistrates, masters, and witnesses; which however, as regards the latter, their steadfast refusal to criminate any of their former companions tended greatly to lessen, though the mob continued in a very excited state, and seemed as if only the spark was wanting to set their unruly passions in a blaze.

In these circumstances, the people in the street still waiting in a very excitable state, it was considered necessary to call out a party of the military to convey the prisoners to the county jail. That measure had the effect of drawing away a great part of the crowd, but still so many lounged about, that an escort of police had to see the various witnesses home in safety. In this

way Edward Archbold and his friends were conveyed to his home, which was close at hand. They had been warned to take care of themselves for that day, and therefore sought the shelter of Mrs. Archbold's roof to enjoy their freedom — freedom of a very restricted kind indeed — but to one at least of the party more pleasantly passed in that comfortable parlour than it could have been elsewhere. Of course both Mrs. Archbold and Annie had been very anxious, they had heard the shouts of the excited mob, seen the soldiers depart with the prisoners, and then beheld Edward and the other two marched up the hill, somewhat as if they were prisoners too; but if so, they were very willing ones, and the governors of the jail to which they were committed very kind and pleasant keepers. Of course the general conversation was about the trial, and then about their departure for North-umberland; and when they separated more into groups, it seemed quite natural that John should be beside Annie, and that they should converse long and earnestly about the bringing of Marion to Grasaig, a thing

on which Annie had set her heart. It was growing late before John and Frank could get away, and before they did, they had promised to pass the most of the next day, which was Sunday, with their friends.

CHAPTER VI.

FRANK'S STORY OF HIS ADVENTURE.

"WELL, Frank, what do you think of my friends?" John asked, when they had got back to his lodgings. "Very nice people, aren't they?"

"Very much so, indeed; especially the young lady. Ah, John, John! you may well blush. Much as you wrote me of the brother, and of Mrs. Archbold, it is very singular you never mentioned her; and yet so intimate that you pass night after night in her society."

"Pooh, pooh, man! what of that? Why, it's not more than a month since I made their acquaintance, and how can I have said much about them? I haven't been half-a-dozen times in the house, and I don't think I have seen Annie much oftener."

"Well, well! she appears to be a fine

frank girl ; and somehow, though your acquaintance be so short, you do seem to get on amazingly. I thought I should find you over head and ears in your books and drawings, and that you would have shown me some new machine, or at least some improvement on an old one, you had invented ; and lo and behold ! I find you already so intimate with a pretty girl, that you can monopolize her a whole night, just as if you had been acquainted with her all your days : and to keep it all so quiet, too. Fie, fie, John ! What will Marion say when she hears ? ”

Frank laughed heartily. All John’s expressed determination to go ahead, his resolution to study his craft thoroughly, seemed to be put aside, and himself subjugated for the time by the black eyes of Annie Archbold. But if Frank thought so, he was greatly mistaken. To John Arnold, the possessor of these said black eyes was a perpetual incitement to press on, to master his craft, and to raise himself in the world. This he had a strong assurance in himself he should accomplish ; and he possessed also the strong will to do, and the unshrinking

perseverance in doing, whatever sort of labour was needful to further such advancement.

"Joke as you like, Frank," he answered: "it is too pleasant to have you beside me, even if you do tease, for me to grumble. But perhaps I'll soon be able to show you whether those same black eyes are a help to me or a hindrance; a very little while longer will show that. But, lad, it's a great pleasure and a mighty comfort to have such friends; and an evening spent with them, or an evening's walk with Edward and Annie, is not time lost, I can tell you, though there bean't a word of shop in it all."

"No manner of doubt about it, John. You showed that so clearly to-night, that a blind man might have perceived it. Oh, no doubt you have improved the time wonderfully well! But, do you know, I was fully as much taken with the quiet kindness and warm courtesy of the mother, as with the frankness of the daughter. I feel quite in love with the old lady; and the manner in which she received me so much reminded me of another lady I shall have to tell you about by and bye."

"So you well might be taken with her. It's not often either of us has seen just such a woman; and I'm sure we never were acquainted with one like her, a lady in the best sense of the word."

"We have seen women as kindly and as hospitable, of course, in our own country," John added; "in every farm-house we could find them; but, then, though genuine, and what one likes, it's so different from Mrs. Archbold's kindliness. Yes, you might well be struck with her appearance and manner. But I forgot, you have been making new friends, too; and, save that somewhat hazy letter a month ago, you haven't told me anything about them. Now, my lad, I expect a full, true, and particular account of your doings since I left you; a true and full narration, if you please. Go a-head, lad!"

"Well, then, for my story; but, really, I hardly know how to begin, or where. I've been slaving on, both by night and day, as you already know; and the masters at the Institution say that I've made fair progress, too. And, John,"—here Frank's voice became more serious and earnest,—“I think

I feel sure of my proper calling now. It has been borne more home on my mind and conscience every day, and has been, of course, a constant stimulus to me to press forward. It will be a long time before I can, in the ordinary course, be able to enter the Church; but I feel that that is my true vocation."

"If so, lad, the time must be used diligently. By and by we might be able to keep you from work altogether. We are able thoroughly to do it just now, and if you have definitely decided we'll see when we get home about it. But of your new friends—how did you become acquainted with them?"

"Patience, John, patience! Well, you see, after you left Liverpool, I withdrew myself more and more from the men in the shop, and took new lodgings, a good long way from the work, higher up the town, so that coming home at night I had not to go the same road with those lads who were attending the classes that we used to meet. The nearest way from the Institution to my new home was a very lonely one, through brick-fields old and new, where some streets had

been laid out, but never built. It happened one night, as I was going home,—it was a moonlight night,—that I saw a struggle going on a good bit before me, and heard a half-choking cry for help. I ran up, you may be sure, as fast as I could to the place, and saw an elderly gentleman and a young girl beset by a party of half-grown lads and women. The old man they had nearly suffocated, having got a handkerchief twisted around his neck, and a few seconds more would have seen him strangled. The girl also they were treating in the rudest possible way, which made my blood boil then, and does still when I think of it. Luckily I had a good stick in my hands, and, as they were too much engaged to hear the sound of my hasty approach, I was among them like a shot, and had the girl freed from the vile creatures who were about her before they knew what they were about. You would have laughed to see how they lay sprawling about in the mud; for my sudden dash among them did more than the stick, though it was not idle, you may believe, and made no distinction of persons or sex, so that many of them were sent flying

headlong off the pavement into a beautiful deep ditch, full of black and most odorous mud, which, had they been willing, prevented them from easily returning to the charge. The girl I had rescued at once rushed to her father's assistance, and I with her, when a somewhat similar scene ensued. One loud cry of 'Police! police!' and, as if it had been an echo, 'Here's the police!' from some of the rascals themselves, did great service; and I managed to knock over two or three of the old gentleman's assailants into the ditch, though I had a severe struggle this time, and got some hardish blows: and before long, while assisting the gentleman, I had the satisfaction of seeing the vagabonds dispersing in all directions. But the old man, now lying on the ground, even when freed from the kerchief, was insensible; and his daughter, though she was very quiet, and made no lamentation or outcry, seemed dreadfully distressed and alarmed. It was a strange fix this for me to be in. It was late,—a man lying on the pavement before me—it might be dying,—and a young delicate lassie who would not leave her father, and whom I could not leave

defenceless for an instant, even to seek help. However, I did the best I could; I managed to get the old gentleman to the side of the road, and then, having removed his neck-cloth, I waited beside him, neither knowing what else I should do, nor where I could go to seek help.

“So I waited and watched, and encouraged the girl as I best could; and in a little while the old man began to revive, and was soon able to sit up; as to walking, that was altogether out of the question. In such a place to expect the coming of a conveyance or of a passenger was almost hopeless, and I was at a loss for a time what I should do. The gentleman could not speak, his tongue seemed to be so swollen that he could not articulate, though he attempted to do so. At last I thought I heard the sound of wheels in the distance. I ran as fast as I could along the road towards the first crossing, and happily caught an empty cab that was passing, which I succeeded in bringing back to the place where I had left them, just in time, for the scoundrels were beginning to make their appearance again as the cab drove up. We soon got the old gentle-

man into the vehicle along with his daughter, and I was preparing to go away home, when the girl said, very gently, laying her hand at the same time on my arm, 'Come with us; do not leave us yet:' almost the only words I had heard her speak. I did not hesitate, and then she gave the cabman an address in one of the best streets near the square, and away we went.

"Well, I saw them home in safety to a magnificent house, where our arrival created considerable stir, and at first no little alarm. But all was very soon explained, and while one servant was despatched for a doctor, I assisted another to carry the old gentleman into an elegant room, the like of which I had never seen before. The master of the house looked, with his torn and muddy garments, very much out of place with the elegant furniture. His wife, a fine-looking lady, was very profuse in her thanks, and I am sure, what is not so commonly the case with profuse people, very sincere withal. Of course I wished much to get away, but was stopped at once, the young girl put it quite out of the question; I must needs stay to see the doctor. As I said before, I did not

come off altogether scatheless. I had received some rather stinging blows about the face, and my upper lip was rather severely cut, my eye was bruised and swollen, and a good deal of blood had flowed from the nose and lip; so I did not cut a remarkably pretty figure, you may reckon. Miss Mary had gone away as soon as her father had been placed safely on the couch; but she soon returned, in another dress, and I had the opportunity, while waiting for the doctor's arrival, to observe her more closely and particularly. I don't mean to say she is as pretty as your —, I mean as Miss Archbold, any way not in the same style; but she has a beauty of her own, which is singularly attractive—the beauty of expression and feeling. Then she is very young, only about sixteen, I should fancy. So she looked to me, then, just what she indeed really is, a very pretty, very engaging girl; and so there is no need to compare her with a full-grown woman. But I was almost overpowered by the way she came up to me, when she returned to the room, and took hold of my hands, and said so quietly, while the tears stood in her eyes,—

‘Thanks, thanks: thank God for your coming to save us!’ Then she told her mother, more in detail, all the circumstances as they had happened.

“At last the doctor came, and though he found Mr. Cuthbert much restored and able to speak, he at once ordered him to bed; as for me, he ordered me to do, what I should have liked to have done before, if I could have found the means, that is, wash my face. But even when I had done so, I was by no means pleased with my appearance. I don’t think I am vain, John,—perhaps I am, though,—but I think I never felt so much ashamed of my appearance as I did when I got a sight of myself in the looking-glass. If I could have done so, I would have left the house at once; for a black eye, a cut lip, and disordered dress, were not pretty in a lady’s drawing-room. But there was Mary Cuthbert at the door, waiting for my coming down stairs, and so, will I, nil I, I had to go into that dainty room again. The doctor and Mrs. Cuthbert were with the old gentleman, who, though very much shaken, was likely to be all right again, the doctor said, in the morning; so Miss Mary was

alone when I entered, and my awkwardness was increased: first, there was the consciousness of my *outré* appearance, then this other, being alone with a pretty girl, who, it was clear, was accustomed to see a very different class of people from working engineers; but she was so gentle, and, though so young, so thoughtful and womanly, that, though we could only converse about the assault and of the robbery, or perhaps something worse, which had been prevented, we got on, by degrees, pretty well. When Mrs. Cuthbert came back and said that her husband was getting on very well, I felt much more at my ease. In a while I told them what I was, and where I had been: I thought, indeed, that might induce them to let me go. At length I was permitted to leave, after I had been fairly constrained to promise to come the next evening. Miss Mary herself escorted me to the door, and I went home almost fancying the whole was a dream."

"Well, Frank, that was an adventure!" John said; "but what came of it at last? I know already that your acquaintance with this family did not end there."

"No," Frank continued, after a slight pause, "it did not; but don't be in such a prodigious hurry; neither is it likely to end so soon. Well, I called again the next night, and found as hearty a welcome as man could desire from all. I still was not a very presentable figure; a black eye does not get well in a day, you know; and all day long I had been pestered, and mocked, and jeered, in the work, about that new ornament to my face; and these tormentings were all the more indulged in because of the way in which I had kept aloof from the jollifications and rough games of the other young men. My bruised face was a splendid topic for them all, and there was no end to the remarks and would-be witticisms they cracked upon me, and the names they called me. Mr. Cuthbert was with his family when I called, and received me very kindly. He had not been able to go out, and was still suffering from the struggle and the half-strangling he had undergone, and his throat was still swollen and livid from the twisting of the neckerchief. His wife and daughter had told him all that I had told them about myself, and about my evening work at the

Institution. Of course—for people like, if possible, to see things with their own eyes, and hear them with their own ears—I had to go over again to Mr. Cuthbert my story of what I was, and who I was; and I can tell you that even that night I felt well repaid, by the pleasant hour I passed with those kind people, for all the sneers and jibes of the day. Mr. Cuthbert said, and seemed to feel it as true, and no compliment, that I had not only saved his and his daughter's lives, but also a great deal of valuable papers which he had with him; so that he felt himself very much my debtor, which of course I disclaimed. However, not to dwell on that, I passed a very pleasant hour with them, and very often have since then. One particular thing pleased me greatly, though I felt ashamed and awkward about it at first,—and that was, their wish that I should spend every Sunday with them, nothing less. As I have since found out, Mrs. Cuthbert has the notion—I fancy a very good and true one—that many young men who have no home or kindred in the town, might be saved from carelessness in religious matters, from vice and even ruin, if respectable fami-

lies, like her own, would only look after one such individual, take charge, so to speak, of one whose near friends are far away, welcome him heartily at all times, and especially to make sure of him on Sundays, getting him to go to church with themselves, and inducing him to consider their house, for that day at least, as home. To me, you may be sure, this arrangement was most agreeable, after the first awkwardness was over; and ever since I have gone to church with them, dined with them, and spent the afternoon in a Sunday-school with which Miss Mary is connected. So these last few months have been most pleasant ones to me; and the Sundays the most so of all."

"But about that proposal of Mr. Cuthbert's?" asked John again: "what about that, lad?"


"Why, just this: after Mr. Cuthbert was able to go out again, he went to the Institution, as Mary told me, and made inquiries about my scholarship. You may suppose he could learn little there more than I had told him, that I was a mere tyro; but the secretary was good enough to say I was a very promising one, getting on rapidly. So the

old gentleman, who has two sons, mere boys, at a boarding-school in the country, proposes to bring them home, and that I should give up working as an engineer, and become their tutor, with the power of attending all the classes I wish besides. I felt very much inclined to close with this very kind offer at once; but your letter, and a sort of fear that, though I could learn quickly, I might not be at all so able to teach, has prevented me from doing so. But oh, if everything else were suitable, what a change it would be to live in the midst of such a family, and be able to pursue my studies straight forward! and, above all, to get out of an atmosphere of vice and depravity, into one of virtue and purity. Our work, while it still has all the decent men you knew, has received a large influx of new blood; and the doctrines we used to shudder at, the dogmas of Socialism in their vilest and filthiest form, and the negations of infidelity, are more rampant than ever. Perhaps we do wrong to suppose or to say that Owen advocates the wild theories and impure principles which are put forth in his name. But that is of little consequence; it is the doctrines

I have heard canvassed at the bench and throughout the shop by the men, that I wish to characterise, and depraved and unholy they are to the core."

"But I followed your advice, John; and, though I fancy it would be a great step in advance, and a great advantage to me, I asked Mr. Cuthbert to give me time to think of it; and when we get home we must have a family council on the matter. So long as my mind was not positively settled, it was, I thought myself, and was quite sure you did, the wisest plan to continue at work in the shop; but now that my heart is decidedly fixed, such an opportunity as this one opens, whereby I could get into a more regular course of study and into a pure moral atmosphere, deserves, I fancy, very serious consideration. Indeed, Miss Mary succeeded in making me promise conditionally, and I believe that there are already rooms prepared for me as soon as I go back. However, nothing can be fixed until we have discussed the whole matter at home."

"Yes, we must do that; let it be left till then," said John. "If in this new position you could be free and independent, well



and good, it might do; if it would not be so, rather let us all work our fingers to the bone, if need be, to push you through, than you should accept it; that's my idea."

"Of course they know all about me now, about us all, I might say; for often, when I've been sitting with Mrs. Cuthbert and Mary on the Saturday afternoons, they have led me to speak of home, and of you, and of Marion. Mr. Cuthbert was greatly taken with your determination to learn all. See, here's a packet I'm to give Marion."

Frank produced a little packet as he spoke; it was securely sealed, and simply addressed to Miss Marion Arnold.

"I don't know what it is, but fancy it will be some ornament for Marion. I got it from Mary herself to give to her; and see, I have got something of the same kind to show you myself. This little watch and chain was given me by Mrs. Cuthbert, as she said to show her admiration of, and gratitude for, the help I had rendered to her husband and daughter."

"They must be very kind people."

"Indeed, that is not a strong enough

term; they are thoroughly Christian people, and their kindness is thoroughly Christian kindness. This trinket is valuable, and I appreciate it very highly; but one hour spent with that mother and daughter is more worth to me than it ten thousand times over. But then remembrance, even in this form, this tangible way to Marion and myself, is likewise very pleasant. I never look at this watch but the sweet, gentle, spiritual face of Mary Cuthbert shines before me."

John smiled faintly. "Well," he said, "I have something else to ask you. Have you noticed anything peculiar in Marion's letters to you lately?"

"Yes; sometimes I've thought she must be very melancholy, or that she had not been well when she wrote. They ought to be more cheerful at home than ever, now that they have this Mr. Johnson, the young priest, living with them."

"One would think so; but so it does not appear to be, at least so far as the dear lassie is concerned. I have been much troubled about her, Frank; her letters lately have been growing more and more melancholy and desponding, and she wearies sadly for us to come."

"What can be the matter, think you; not any doubt of Harry, surely?"

"I don't think that; I sent you his last letter, didn't I? Well, Marion was writing in this sad strain before it arrived, so it could not be anything about him. If we find her sad when we get home, do you know I've a great mind to get her to come back with me for a month or two? Mother 'll soon agree, I fancy, if I can show her it would be for Marion's good."

"A very good plan, whether she is desponding or not; she would be all the better for seeing a little more of the world any way. But this is not your own idea, John, I know it isn't."

John blushed, and laughed, and twisted about in his chair, and looked both conscious and somewhat foolish for a moment.

"No," he answered; "it is Annie Archbold's notion, not my own; but a change will do Marion a world of good. It won't do to have her ill or drooping, while we are able to help it; but you'll have to give me all the help you can. I fancy it may be

hard to get mother to consent to her coming here, at least at first."


"Very likely; but she will if it is to do Marion good, I am quite sure of that. Have you written that your friend Archbold is coming with us?"

"Yes, I wrote last night; they'll be sure to get the letter on Sunday, when they go to the meeting."

"The young priest, ay," said Frank. "Has Marion written much about him to you? To me she did at first, but for the last month or two I don't think she has once mentioned his name. I did not think of that before, but isn't it strange?"

"Well, I didn't think of it either; but it has almost been the same with her letters to me; she speaks of the old man, and of the meeting being better attended, but there is never a word now of Mr. Johnson, while at first her letters used to be full of him. I wonder can he have anything to do with her despondency?"

"Perhaps he has; well, well, whatever troubles Marion will be all for the best, though it may be very hard to bear just now."



But John, struck with the idea that Mr. Johnson was in some way the cause of Marion's sadness, looked very stern and grim, and woe betide him, priest though he was, if it proved that he was really the cause.

CHAPTER VII.

OUTCHESTER AGAIN.—SUNDAY.

"THERE'S a letter from John to-day, Mother," Marion Arnold said to her mother when she came home from the meeting on Sunday. "He will be home here, he says, with Frank, and Mr. Archbold, the young friend he has spoken so much of lately, on Tuesday night, if he's spared."

Mrs. Arnold, a most unusual thing with her since Mr. Johnson had come to the district, had remained at home this day.

"Bless them, bless them baith, my dear boys!" Mrs. Arnold's heart began to melt already even at the thought. "And he's well, and we'll see them so soon now. Marion, hinny, I dinna knaw how it happens, but I feel as if this was a mair than ordinar' hame-comin'."

"So do I, Mother, and so it is in a mea-

sure. They've been out more into the world, and further away from home. They only truly began to fight their own life's battle when they went to Liverpool."

Marion looked sadly down, and sighed; their going to Liverpool was to see Harry Grey away on his long, weary, and, as it now proved, hazardous voyage.

"Yes, hinny, that'll just be it. At Newcastle they were just at hame in a way; and then we could see folk that had seen them often, your faither and the neebours when they gae'd south aye brocht word o' them; but now they ha'e been in strange far-away places, and amang strange, maistly outlandish folk. Does John, hinny, say ought about that disturbance among the workmen he mentioned before?"

"He does, Mother; it's something that has happened that causes him to bring this young man, Archbold, with him, to get him for a while out of harm's way till the folk cool down again; but if his friend was in harm's way, I fear so would John himself be, for he has aye said that the men didn't like him much."

"My laddie, to think that there was ony-

body that didna like him! But what's come ower yer faither and the young priest; did they no come down wi' ye?"

"I left them at the Manse, and came down the drive with the rest of the touns-people; I daresay they'll be here by and by."

"What gars the awd feckless fiddling body keep them sae lang, I wonder, and sae often too! There's Mr. Johnson gangs up maist every day, sure that ought to content the awd man; and he sees and bothers your faither often enough. I canna tell how provoking it is, keeping the dinner spoiling for his nonsense."

It may be inferred from this little angry tiff that Mrs. Arnold had changed much in her opinion of Mr. Fraser; and it was quite true; Mr Johnson had completely won Mrs. Arnold's heart, carried her by storm as it were, and she regarded him as in some measure belonging to herself, living as he did *en famille* with them; and therefore she was specially heedful of his comfort, and specially displeased when he was, as on this occasion, detained by the old man. But she bustled away to the kitchen to see that all the vivers were kept in right order for

the dinner of the two hungry men when they should come.

But how does Marion look now?—is there any change in the appearance, as her brothers fancy there is in the letters of the fair girl? Yes, there is a change. It would be wrong and unjust to say that it is for the worse, but there is a change, which, however, has come on so gradually that her friends have hardly remarked it; it is only noticed by those who have not seen her for a time. She is taller, and seems thinner than when she was first introduced to the reader; her face looks more pale and delicate, and there is an expression of gravity, almost of sadness, in the eyes, which aids in giving her a more spiritual look. It will be saddening at the first to those affectionate brothers; but Marion is still in good health, though whatever it is that is disturbing her mind has begun to re-act on her physical nature. Marion Arnold is more woman-like than when last we saw her in the garden some months ago, and during these months has had her own trials, which are of such a nature that she confides them to no one, and, indeed, in which, save from those far

away, she could hardly expect sympathy. In the countryside there are few of her own age or station who would not rather have rejoiced in what grieved her, and dearly as her parents love her, most precious as she is to them, they have tacitly become her chief persecutors. Now her hope is in John, and to him she will confide fully what it is that causes her heart, before so light and cheerful, to be now so heavy. Though she has only heard thrice from Harry Grey since he left England, it is not that which has brought about this change. She clearly understood from the very first how uncertain his correspondence might be, and now that she knows somewhat more fully the dangers of the expedition in which the ship is to be engaged, though it makes her very anxious about his safety and welfare, and to yearn from week to week for further letters from him, it is not altogether the want of these that casts over her sweet face that look of care and weariness it now so often bears. It is something different entirely from, and yet has close and intimate connection with, her position towards the absent engineer, and of such a nature that

she knows not how to break away from the trammels it has put upon her, and she longs and wearies more and more for the arrival of her brothers, for the advice and aid of John and Frank.

But her father and the young minister have arrived from Fordham, and after submitting in patient resignation to a lecture from Mrs. Arnold for having put off their time with the "awd man," and having caused the dinner to be spoiled, they sat down to table. After their bodily wants had been satisfied, Marion said quietly to her father—

"I had a letter to-day from John, Father. He expects to be here on Tuesday night, Christmas Eve, him and Frank together."

"Weel, lassie, that's guid news. Very soon now you'll see my twa sons, Mr. Johnson. No bad shoots of the awd tree either, —are they Mistress?" but Mistress Arnold had left the room before the question was put to her.

"*If we are spared,*" Mr. Johnson answered. "I have long wished to know them; I shall be very happy to see them, indeed."

"Of course I meant that, Sir," Mr. Arnold answered, a little annoyed at the em-

phasis laid on the words "if we are spared," just as if they were meant to convey a reproof to him. "We all too frequently forget that it's on the Lord's will that everything depends; but though I dinna use the words, that does not say that the thought wasna in my heart. But, Sir, the lads 'll be greatly pleased to see you here, nae doubt of that, and as little doubt have I that you'll like them as that they'll like you."

"Ay, guid man; and there's that lad comin' wi' them that John has written sae much about—Mr. Archbold, ye knaw," said Mrs. Arnold. "The dear bairns! it looks sae lang lang since they were here that though nane o' them are prodigals, nor, thank God, gi'en ony signs o' being sae, I reckon we should kill the fatted calf for them, and gie them a blithe hame-comin'."

"Their hearts ha'e aye been at hame, Mistress. They've been guid lads, baith o' them, a' their lives, wi' their hearts in the right place, so make ye as muckle o' them as you like; you'll no spoil them. But," Mr. Arnold continued, more seriously and earnestly, "they've been more out into the world this time, and something seems to tell me that

there's more, much more we need to think o' for this hame-comin' than just a cheery welcome."

"Yes," the minister said. "Of course I don't know either of them, but from what you've told me I should fancy that their plans for the future will be beginning to loom before them now, and they will be each day more anxious to press forward. I know the feeling well, it is only very lately that I was over head and ears in a similar anxiety."

"We maun expect that; I wadna ha'e my bairns aye hingin' upon my apron-string, dearly as I love them," said the mistress; "but whatever may happen, however they get on, even if they marry and settle, which, I daresay, no a one o' them has ever gi'en a thought o' yet, while I live I knaw this place will be a hame to them baith. God be wi' them, and gi'e them a safe journeying, pray I!"

"And, Father," Marion said, "though John doesn't speak very plainly, it would seem that there's been more disturbances; and it's because of them, and to be out of the way of danger, that he is bringing Mr.

Archbold with him. So his hame-coming will be something like fleeing to the city of refuge till the storm blows past, and ——."

Mr. Johnson was sitting gazing furtively at the sweet girl, with a look of such admiration as she spoke of her brother fleeing home for safety, that when Marion caught his eye she stopped abruptly, blushed slightly, and then, as she cast down her eyes, turned quite pale, and it seemed as if a shudder passed through her frame; fortunately the old people did not notice it, and Mrs. Arnold said—

"And where else should they flee to on this earth?—there's nae place like a faither's house for shelter in a' cases; ye dinna misdoubt that, hinny?"

"Ay, Marion," the father said, "we'll make the young man welcome, though he's goin' clean contrar' to your mother's notion; for he's leaving his mother's house to come to a strange one. Well, well, isn't it a strange mode that, that these mechanics take of getting the masters to give what they want, Mr. Johnson? Oh, if all the farmers were to agree and form a union, and then resolve that they wouldna sell a

beast, or a sheep, or any victual, till the prices were up to a certain pitch, we should have a rebellion, and would be put down wi' the strong hand; and here's these men doin' something that's very like the same, keeping up their commodity, for if beasts be what I sell, their labour and skill's what they sell, and if it's unreasonable and is called cruel and wicked for farmers to strike for higher prices, why shouldn't it be thought more cruel still and wicked for mechanics to strike too, whether it be for wages or other things? Seein' that, we farmers never try to compel our neighbours by force to do as we do, but these mechanics do this; they're not content with starving their own families, but they insist on starving the families of their neighbours also; isna that waur than the like o' us seekin' a guid price for our goods?"

"People will never look at it in that light, partly because a combination among farmers,—you will find thousands and tens of thousands in every large town in the country who believe that there is such a combination already—if even such a thing were possible, would be said to starve the

people, whereas these mechanics only starve themselves and their families, on the principle, I suppose, that a man may do what he likes with his own."

"He that provides not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," Marion murmured.

"Very true, Marion; and as we have some of our own people to provide for to-day with a different kind of food, it is time that we were going to set about it," said Mr. Johnson, rising from the table.

On Sundays, ever since the young minister had come to Outchester, the children of the neighbouring farm-towns had been gathered into one of the large rooms of the farm-house, whom Mr. Johnson and Marion, with the help of some of the neighbours, taught. Indeed, since the young minister's arrival, everything connected with the religious life of the congregation had undergone a vital change. There was life now in the preachings, careful house-to-house visitations and ministrations, and the meeting-house, as a consequence, which had been nearly emptied, was now becoming

fuller and fuller every Sunday. As for such things as Sunday schools, people who had been in the district all their lives had, indeed, read of them in the newspapers, and heard of them from people who came from other districts, but had no idea what they really were till the young minister set one in operation on the Sunday mornings before service in the meeting-house itself, and one here in Outchester in the evenings. The Sunday school was a great delight to Marion, perhaps more so at first than now, for over everything just then a shadow was cast, which dimmed her bright and cheerful spirit.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOING HOME.

IN Grasaig that Sunday John and Frank Arnold were with the Archbolds at church and at home; and in the evening, seeing that Annie and Edward had been so closely kept in the house all the week, the young men proposed a walk, and soon found themselves out in the clear, cold, frosty starlight. Surely, they thought, there would be little chance of their being annoyed on the Sabbath night. Maggie Barnard had joined them at tea, and so they went all away together to enjoy the cold fresh sea breeze, and the brisk walk, which the keen frosty air rendered necessary to keep the blood in circulation. A little time ago Annie had been in such walks condemned to be only a sort of make-believe, and had with difficulty been able

to keep herself quiet beside the other two. Now, with her hand on John's arm, enveloped in his thick soft plaid, she felt very differently. She had described to him the comic misery of being a third in a company where her absence would have been acceptable. Now she felt, in quite another way though, that two are good company, but three are not, and poor Frank soon saw that he was sadly in the way. At one time he kept alongside of Annie and John, then he fell back to Maggie and Edward; but it mattered little which party he was with, he felt himself to be somewhat of a drag upon both. Of course John and his companion did not care who heard their conversation; they were not as yet somebodies, as the other two were, though people would say they were on the high road to become so with all convenient speed; yet it seemed so much more pleasant to be walking alone than with any one, even Frank, by their side, thus perforce keeping their communings in an indifferent channel, and interrupting those silences which often come over young people, and which, painfully awkward as they seem, often mean so much.

However, there was in this case no help for it. Frank, to be sure, had his Liverpool beauty to think about; report saith not but that he did; and they gradually closed together and spoke of the long journey of the morrow. Maggie Barnard did not now say much about it, but what she did say was still in the same spirit which had annoyed Ned and his sister so much on the night when the journey was first proposed; and even that Sabbath night, after she had heard them both stigmatised by some parties of young men whom they passed as "knobs," and "black sheep," and "lick-spittles," and saw that it was only the Scottish reverence for the Sabbath, the habitual respect for the Lord's day, which prevented these men from openly hooting Edward and his companions, she yet did not frankly and heartily approve of and sanction Edward's journey. Therefore, though Edward and Maggie parted without any show of coolness, there were feelings on both sides at work, not at all propitious to their future harmony.

On Monday the young men set out. There was no railway in those days by

which they could speed across the country in a few hours to their destination, as they could do now. Of necessity they must be the better part of two days on the road, and have to spend a night in Edinburgh. Moreover, they had no idea of travelling by the expensive stage coach, which would only have had this advantage, that they would have been in Edinburgh a few hours sooner. A cheaper conveyance was to be had; thus they sailed up the Clyde, beautiful even at that dull, dreary season, in one of the swift river boats. On the quay when they embarked was a party of the Unionists on duty, who, when they first caught sight of John, were beginning to hoot, but changed their minds when they saw that the little party had travelling bags with them, and greeted their departure with cheers. From Glasgow they went east by a conveyance once greatly in vogue among travellers of their class, the old so-called swift canal boat, which now is numbered among the things that were, the fossils of the last generation. Old travellers who remember its much vaunted swiftness may well think of those tedious,

dreary journeys with a shudder. It was no joke travelling in those days, and even though one could change their position more easily than they can do in a railway carriage, it was a dreadfully tedious and weary journey, of little less than ten hours, with only one break during the whole route. Oh! the very thoughts of that long stretch, the thought of the long narrow boat, which you could hardly help fancying about to capsize each moment, and of the cold, the bitter cold, which saturated, so to speak, the whole body, beginning with the hands and feet, and gradually tightening its freezing embrace till you felt well nigh altogether torpid. At the distance of very many years it makes one shiver to think of it. Our travellers bore it cheerfully and well, however; but there were others more thinly clad, worse fed, and of more delicate health, who, when they came to the locks where there was about a mile to walk, could hardly get ashore, scarcely knew, indeed, that they had feet at all at first. The inn at the foot of the locks, you may be sure, had plenty of customers that day, and no small quantity of strong drinks

and hot ones were consumed, on the principle of raising the steam by an extra supply of fuel; they did not remember that the larger the fire, the greater the heat for a time, the more intense would be the feeling of cold when it died away. John noticed one rather delicate-looking young man who could not at first grasp the spoon wherewith to eat the soup he had ordered, and who was actually forced to make the waiter put his hand into his pocket and take out money to pay for what he got. Then such stamping of feet and clapping of hands was, perhaps, never heard; and the chorus of half painful, half ludicrous exclamations that broke forth as the people began to thaw, and felt sharp pains running through their limbs, and their cheeks glowing and burning, as if exposed to great heat, was a sound to be remembered. Then, when the forty or fifty people had thawed a little, and the blood began to circulate more freely, there arose simultaneous demands for whisky, and ale, and the various liquors that the people fancied, and the large room became a perfect Babel. Our friends, having refreshed themselves moderately,

set off at a brisk rate to walk to the head of the locks.

"How much further have we to go in that dull conveyance, which minds me of nothing so much as a London omnibus multiplied by ten and made to float?" Ned asked. "I hope we shan't be as thoroughly frozen when we reach Edinburgh as we were when we arrived here."

"Truly, I don't know; but I fancy this place is little more than half-way," John answered. "But I don't think we shall feel the cold so much in the next boat: any way we must provide against it a little better."

"Ay, ay," Frank responded; "it's well and easy to say provide; but how if we are to take the common plan, and the one you'll see most of the people adopt? we'll either be tipsy or starving before we get half way. We must be careful against both contingencies."

"Certainly; but still we'll make sure. A little spirits won't hurt, though too much would; besides, we'll likely have more passengers, and therefore the boat will be warmer," said John.

"Yes, passengers generally flock in as

one reaches the end of a journey," Ned answered. "But I say, John, saw you ever such a laughable set of scarecrows as we were when we got out of that boat? I couldn't help laughing at the queer grimaces most of us were making, as the blood went tingling down through our fingers again. Didn't you feel it, old fellow?"

"Indeed, who did not! it was like to make me cry out," Frank answered. "But just fancy such a state as that poor young fellow must have been in when he couldn't even get at his money."

"Truly," said John, "had he been all his life working among and handling cold iron, be the weather hot or cold, he would have stood the frost better; but I felt very much for the poor women and the bairns, who aren't used to travelling or to rough it as the men are; and look, there's one of them before us; she has a baby in her arms, and that little chap at her side, I noticed her in the boat; poor thing! she didn't stay to get refreshment, and neither her nor the child have either been warmed or fed. You didn't see her, did you?"

"No," Ned answered. "I'm sure she wasn't in the house at all."

"Well then, poor thing, perhaps it was because of poverty, and we must not see her want; let us hurry on, perhaps there may be some place where we can get some refreshment for her and the little lad before the boat starts; any way we can see that she gets a good seat in the warmest corner."

"So be it, John," Edward cried. "It is just like you. I say, Frank, you and I are two selfish scamps not to have thought of that !"

"Perhaps," Frank answered, smilingly. "Don't be too sure of that either; time tries all, as the proverb says."

As the young men hurried on up the hill their spirits rose rapidly, and they could feel the warm blood coursing once more briskly through their veins, and they soon overtook the poor woman. The contrast between their quick vigorous step and her slow and painful progress was very great. She was quite young, about Frank's age, if so much. On one arm she carried her carefully wrapped-up baby, and in the other

hand a large bundle, while the little boy trotted along by her side, holding fast by her gown, crying bitterly, poor little fellow, and with his hands livid with the cold. Little wonder that the progress of the young mother was a painful and slow one with her burdens, and the boy a drag upon her every footstep; it would have been so at any time, but in such weather it was utterly exhausting. The boy was the object of Frank's attention and care; he went and spoke to him kindly, asked what was the matter, took his cold little hands and began to chafe them, and to comfort him, gave him some biscuits, and with great satisfaction watched and encouraged him to eat heartily, in which Frank succeeded, though great sobs came now and again, and tears silently welled out of his eyes, and seemed to freeze on his cheeks; but he soon became quite contented. John as quietly had relieved the mother of her burden, made her take his arm, and cheered her with words of encouragement and comfort. The poor woman was sick with cold, perhaps from hunger also. John only guessed that, but it seemed likely; and they thought

she must have fainted had they not come up. However, they were soon at the next starting-place, and with some few minutes to spare. So John got the poor woman comfortably placed in the boat with her children, while Edward and Frank were away busily purchasing cakes, and more substantial fare, to regale the little party. The young woman, a seaman's wife on her way to Leith to meet her husband, cried aloud as the young men came on board, and it was some little time before she could even partake of the warm milk and other refreshments they had brought; neither had they forgotten, notwithstanding Frank's protest, the whisky, which in Scotland then was the universal medicine, the general panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to, be they of what kind they may.

Just as John had anticipated, this latter part of the journey was passed more contentedly than the former parts. The voyagers had made some progress towards acquaintanceship, and were in the cue to become very merry. As they proceeded, little bottles and big ones began to make their appearance, and to circulate rapidly

throughout each party, and laugh and joke and song succeeded the dismal frozen dullness of the earlier portion of the journey. Besides, this new boat went at a greater rate; it was smaller, and drawn by three horses; moreover, it was heated by long sheet iron flasks or cases, filled with hot water, placed along the floor of the boat, and for the greater part of the journey there was less wearying and more comfort among the passengers; but as the night drew on, gradually silence crept over the travellers. It was not this time the silence of torpidity, so much as of weariness and exhaustion, greatly aided, doubtless, by the libations in which so many had indulged; and soon a great majority seemed to have sunk into slumber, ever and anon awaking, as the boat stopped at the various stages, with a start and a groan, only to fall asleep again within the minute.

When they reached Edinburgh, John's first care was for his protégées. He was a stranger in the town, but he knew whence the south coaches started, and near that place he resolved they should lodge for the night. Edward, who knew more about the

ways of towns, insisted they should get a cab, and they did so, and thus were able to take the poor young wife and her children right to the omnibus which would take her to Leith. Then they had to care for themselves, and sallied out to see what they could of the ancient city.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS EVE.—THE COMING HOME.

It is Christmas Eve. The coach from Edinburgh has just driven into the long, straggling village of Framlington, and is slowly ascending the hill towards the inn where it stops. In front of the inn there stands a light country cart filled with clean straw, on which is quite a heap of the true Northumberland plaids, a good, stout, short-legged horse is in the shafts, and a warmly-clad, very pretty young woman is standing a little apart from it, watching the coach as it approaches. The ground is covered to the depth of some six inches with snow, and the air so keen and frosty that the usually clear, pale, transparent complexion of Marion Arnold is glowing with a delicate colour, like the blush on a wild rose. She is eagerly recognised by two of those well-

wrapt-up travellers on the top of the coach, and one can see them already making signals and pointing out their sister to Edward Archbold. Then, when the coach stops, which it does in a very humble and apologetical way, the horses not having even the ghost of a trot left in them, the two Arnolds are off at a single leap, half frozen though they be, as if racing with each other which should first be welcomed. And they received such a welcome! it was worth while to come so far just to see it, Edward thinks, much more to receive it. Marion first shakes hands with, and then is kissing John, and Frank has seized her disengaged hand, until by and by his turn comes, and the young men seem so rejoiced and so proud of the beautiful girl that Edward almost becomes envious. But John soon introduces him, and the kind and cordial welcome he receives puts him all right again, though it lacks what made the other in his estimation so enviable. Then there come the salutations of the people round about; all know the Arnolds, and crowd around them with good wishes; and at last they are glad to hurry into the inn to

escape from the people, and to get some slight refreshment, and then away once more for home.

The conveyance is one such as Edward Archbold never before travelled in, and he thought how Annie would have laughed at journeying in such a primitive mode. In it there is little to fear from the cold; one could get almost over head and ears among the clean straw, and then, "happed up," covered over with plaids, sleep or dream, or, if he liked it better, look round about him on the white-garmented country. It is rather a tedious mode of journeying, however, though cosy enough; but on such an occasion as this, the home-coming of the long-absent brothers, a very cheery one. They are all in good spirits; there seems no, or at least very little, trace of Marion's despondency, and there is mirth and cheerfulness as they pass along the silent country roads, pass through the little hamlets and by the farm-onsteads, and cross the various brooks which intersect the path, and exchange greetings with the few persons abroad, or whom they meet. Now they cross a bridge spanning

a deep ravine filled with slender, lofty, leafless trees, now clothed with snow, and assuming various fantastic and grotesque shapes. Far down below, at the bottom of these deans or dells, they can hear the murmur of the water brattling over the rough rocky bed of the stream, which is too impetuous and its course too rugged to be as yet bound by the frost. Anon they ford open water-courses, where there are stepping-stones for foot passengers. Up hill and down they go, the evening gradually closing upon them, but there is no proper darkness over the white country. At length they reach the old Roman road, and there before them, on the gently-rising slope, appear the ancient trees, and they can see the thin blue smoke curling upwards in the evening air from the old farm-house and the subject cottages of Outchester.

To Mrs. Arnold this was a day of days, to all the farm-hamlet, in fact; for the brothers were looked upon as a sort of public property by all the hind and shepherd families of the place. The old parlour had been decked out by Marion before she

went to meet her brothers, with the green ivy wreaths, the bright holly, and the mystic mistletoe; the large kitchen had under her directions been busked by the maids, and all within the house had the comfortable look of home and of holiday times, and seemed to promise a merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all who resided therein, and a cheery welcome to those who so shortly were to arrive. All the day had been occupied by preparations for the coming of the lads. Their chambers had been got ready, and especial care had been bestowed on the principal one for the stranger, Edward Archbold; and Mrs. Arnold, after her preparations and superintendence were ended, and when she had seen all in readiness for their arrival, was now dressed in a homely, comfortable manner becoming her dignity as a farmer's wife, waiting anxiously for their coming. She was, however, too restless to be still for an instant, but was continually moving from place to place and room to room: at one time in the kitchen to make sure that her dainties were not spoiled or spoiling, again in the parlour, where the

dinner table stood out in brave array of snow-white damask, and glittering ivory, and steel, and crystal; and then out, with shawl about her head, to the corner of the steading, to look down the snow-covered road, and to listen eagerly to catch if possible the sound of their coming. She might have cried, for she felt such an impulse within her bosom. "Why is their chariot so long of coming? why tarry the wheels of their chariot?" She was, indeed, all impatience for the arrival of her children. In the parlour Mr. Arnold and the young minister sat, and waited more sedately, conversing; perhaps the old man did so perforce, to keep the young minister company. Certain it is that the thoughts of both were wandering far from their discourse, as was shown by the hap-hazard nature of their answers, and the sudden way they stopped at the slightest sound. The coming of any guest was an event at Outchester, even to the young priest, much more so such an arrival as now was momentarily expected. At last Mr. Arnold rose.

"Mistress," he said, "I'll gang down the road a bit to meet them, just as far as the

slack, where I'll easy see if they're comin' and near hand."

"Do sae, Francis; ye know this is the first time the lads e'er cam hame that ye didna gang to meet them at the coach."

Mr. Johnson might perhaps have offered to accompany the old man, but he, usually the object of Mrs. Arnold's chiefest care and attention, was for the time fairly ignored and put in the background, in her excitement and eager longing for the coming of her sons. Truly, this was a home-coming different from all former ones; and fortunately Johnson, though he saw himself for the first time become almost a mere cipher in the household, could well understand and appreciate her anxiety. The suspense was not destined long to continue; soon the sound of many voices was heard in the thin pure air, and though they were still at a distance from the house, the mother could not contain herself, but rushed out again. Nor was she alone; most of her dependants were at their cottage doors, and it seemed as if all were eager to be the first to salute their old friends, and, with the yearning mother at

their head, they stood under the snow-laden trees to await their coming.

“ Bless ye, my bairns, bless you baith,” Mrs. Arnold sobbed as they ran up to her. “ Oh, but I’m sae glad and sae happy to see ye hame again.”

And Mrs. Arnold lifted up her voice and wept aloud as she embraced and kissed her sons again and again. But, however tender her nature, however excited now by maternal affection, hospitality had strong claims, and was too sacred and important to permit her to indulge long at such a time in the luxury of weeping for joy over her sons; and therefore she quickly turned to the stranger, and welcomed her young guest to Outchester in such a warm and hearty way that Edward, who had thought Mr. Arnold’s welcome a peculiarly kindly one, which could not be surpassed, felt now that the mistress’s was kindlier and warmer still. John and Frank were by this time surrounded by the hinds and shepherds, receiving a kind of ovation, a welcome as if they had come from some far distant land, were just delivered from some great catastrophe, or had come off a long sea voyage;

and then the whole party adjourned to the house, where Mr. Johnson was waiting rather uneasily to be introduced to the new-comers. Of course for a time there was not a little stir and excitement among them all, and then the strangers went away to their rooms to polish up a little, to thaw their frosty faces before the bright fires which burned cheerily in their several chambers. However, they were not allowed much time for polishing; this was not a house where the inmates specially dressed for dinner; and John, who had shown Edward to his room, was not long again in making his appearance to show him the way downstairs,—a very needful precaution, for if the navigation in the lower region was intricate, it was fully more so above, and a stranger ran great risk of intruding into a bed-room instead of finding the staircase; but the voyage was safely made with John as a pilot, and soon the whole party were seated at the well-spread table.

At table Edward very soon began to understand something of country hospitality. He was seated on Mrs. Arnold's right hand, with Marion as his next neigh-

bour, and at once succeeded in gaining Mrs. Arnold's good graces by the easy way he relieved her of, or aided her in, her duties; and then he submitted so cheerfully to her importunate pressing, and was so happy and merry, that she could not help joining with him in his mirth. Marion, also, was apparently much pleased; and when the substantials of the dinner were fairly finished, and they could converse more at ease, he slid so naturally into conversation with her mother and herself, that the young girl, who had been much amused by him on the way from Framlington, felt now quite as much at home with him as if she had known him long. Mr. Johnson alone of all the party was more silent than usual, and, little imagining that he was narrowly watched by the brothers, he did seem not a little annoyed at Edward's attentions to Marion, and the way in which he engrossed her conversation. When the cloth was removed, and the health of Edward, with a warm welcome to Outchester, drunk, they all settled down around the fire, Marion with her work, her mother with her knitting, while John and Edward gave

an account of the strike, and the part they had been compelled to play in it. These worthy, quiet people at Outchester were confounded at the relation. Bad as they knew the strike to be, they had no conception of the lengths to which men would go while it lasted. It seemed to them a thing truly diabolical; and the idea of sober men actually refusing to go to work, and deliberately, as it were, flinging away the good wages they could have earned, an act of desperate madness; and all for what?—ah! it was that which chiefly irritated Mrs. Arnold, who could not see things properly in the abstract, but must always have them put before her in the concrete form—because Mr. Morton had had the good sense to see that her John was no common person, and had been firm enough to keep him in spite of all the unionists could do. Then, when Edward told them of the attack which had been made upon John, himself, and their comrades, only a few days ago, she listened to him with breathless interest, specially because in it all her John was the hero. Thus they spent some very comfort-

able and pleasant hours, the young men enjoying the warmth of the home fireside all the more from the bitter cold of the two past days. But the evening was not yet ended; there was another scene to which Edward Archbold was to be treated that night.

"Ye'll no be acquaint wi' guisards, I reckon, Mr. Archbold," said Mrs. Arnold; "nor you either, Mr. Johnson. I judge ye'll no ha'e ony o' them in the South."

"I don't know exactly what you mean, Ma'am," Edward said. "Guisards! Oh, yes, in Grasaig, the boys used to go about in parties at this season, in masks, singing and dancing; but I fancy the people look upon them as something very little better than beggars."

"It is a remnant of the old mysteries, I should suppose—a relic of papistical times," said Mr. Johnson. "Sometimes even a kind of drama was acted; at least, I have seen or read somewhere that they had *dramatis personæ*, and, if I mistake not, one of their characters, the person too who collected and carried the money, was called Judas——"

"Oh, I dinna mean that just. Maybe, it may come frae what you say, but our guisards dinna beg siller; they're just niebours like, that come to wish us all the compliments of the season, the Christmas and the New Year, and they maistly gang round a' the farms near hand; but ye'll judge better for yoursels by and by."

"Truly, you'll be amused, Ned. You like fun, and you may have it to your heart's content, and have something to tell somebody when you go back, especially if they dance the cushion dance," said John, laughing; "but I hardly think Mr. Johnson will care much about seeing them."

"Why not, John?" said Edward. "Mr. Johnson's profession is not opposed to harmless amusement, is it?"

"Not at all," Mr. Johnson answered. "I dare say I shall be called singular, and perhaps unclerical, but I only wish we had a few more holidays, and opportunities for the people to enjoy harmless amusements innocently; it is, in a great measure, the want of suchlike which makes the young people seek after doubtful, if not vicious pleasures."

"Yes, in the country here," Mr. Arnold said, "the hinds have only one or two days in the whole year, and no innocent recreation to attract and interest them even then. They go to the hirin' market or to the fair, and all the men over this division of the country, for days after, are hardly fit for anything. Most of our hinds—that is, our farm servants, Mr. Archbold—make it a condition that they are to get away to, at least, two of these in the year."

"Ay, father, and they look forward to them for months; but then there's the feast besides. Still, at the most of these fairs and markets there are shows and suchlike wicked things, and the public-houses, and the public-house tents, which are the worst of all," said Frank.

"At the proper fairs, again, the buyin' and sellin' o' beasts and horses is the principal business," continued the old man, "just as at the hirin' market the chief affair is the hirin' o' servants—professedly, any way. I ha'e aye considered it a great disgrace to this part o' the country that men are forced to meet and sell themsels like brute beasts; truly, they are often enough

like brutes or a's done and they get hame again."

"It's the same in other counties and places besides this, I know," Edward said. "Even in Grasaig they have two of these hiring markets in the year, and farther south they have statutes, which are just like them, and for the self-same purpose."

"All of these old customs, feasts and wakes, hiring markets and fairs, guisings, Christmas waits and carols, and singing in the May, are all old enough to claim Romish, and some of them—like many of the Christmas rites, and the welcoming of the May-day—clearly claim a more ancient origin still, from the times of the Druids," Mr. Johnson said.

"I never heard tell o' waits," Mrs. Arnold said. "Even the carols are very little in vogue in the North, now I mind them; you'll do sae, too, Francis, when we were bairns."

"Truly I do."

"I think it a very pretty custom to hail the coming of May with songs," said Marion; "there are so many stories of the May dew, and the May-pole, and the May

queen, and some of the old poets and writers speak so lovingly of going a-maying, I could quite rejoice at such a custom being revived, if that were possible; or, rather, I should like to see it once in some place where it had never died out."

"It was once my fortune, Miss Marion," Edward said. "I was staying at a place in the Hundred of Wirral, in Cheshire, which, though quite near several large towns, is still full of old customs, and, within a dozen miles of Liverpool, has places and manners as primitive as they were centuries ago—at least, one is inclined to think so. Perhaps, for instance, there is no place in Britain where the practice of systematically plundering wrecked ships was so long carried on as along its coasts, if, indeed, it is yet extinct. However, I was living there, and I remember well, between eleven and twelve, the last hour of April, I heard the sound of music coming down the lane, and then it advanced, through the garden, towards the door. I know a little about music, but the tune played was perfectly strange to me—very wild and plaintive sometimes, as if weeping for the month

that was ending, and again brisk and cheerful, so that one could hardly help dancing. My hostess opened the door, and two performers entered, who played and sang, and in the song congratulated the master on his crops of the past year, and wished him success with those of the present. The only drawback with me to the thorough enjoyment of the scene was that I could not follow the words of the song, which, from what I did catch, was evidently very old, though the singers varied one or two verses, somewhat like improvisators. Another thing I did not like was the fact that these men were going about the country in this way for money. Still, the wild, peculiar melody, and the quaintness of the song, delighted me much. I am sure you would have enjoyed it greatly, Miss Marion, even though the latter part of their conduct was rather rude."

"What was that?" Mrs. Arnold asked.

"Just this, Ma'am, that they insisted on kissing all the women in the house, or that they should pay a fine. Indeed, the former of the conditions was by no means a delectable one, as the men were great rough

fellows, with beards a full week old; but the servant girls, though they screamed and ran into what they thought safe places, were eventually caught, and forced to submit."

There was a general laugh at this, Marion even joining in it, though she blushed very much, and Mrs. Arnold said,—

"Weel, I dinna knaw but our lads would be ready enough at that too, and what for no, in innocent diversion like. But it's surely about their time—I thought I heard the thrummin' o' the fiddle. Will ye gang ben, Mr. Johnson? I'm gaen to dance wi' you myself, Mr. Archbold, so you must come at once. Marion, hinny, ye knaw what to do."

"I fancy I had better keep away," Mr. Johnson said; "I should only put a constraint on their mirth; and, besides, it would fly through the country side, to the hurt of the cause. I don't disapprove of such things; but then I must take care that the cause of religion suffers no damage, even by what would be a perfectly innocent and harmless act on my part."

"Quite right, Sir, and I'll stay beside you," said Mr. Arnold.

Marion rose, and began to set out bottles and glasses, and trays of cake of various kinds. All seemed to have been prepared beforehand, and everybody but the young minister and Ned to know what they had to do. Edward could almost have grumbled aloud, that, where there was to be dancing, he had not the chance of choosing his own partner; he did not, however, grumble, but prudently resolved to wait, and try if he could not secure Marion as such, after all. In a little time, one of the maidens, with rosy cheeks and glancing eyes, came into the room, and said that they were all ready, on which the little party broke up, and the majority adjourned to the kitchen, the scene of the advent of the guisards.

CHAPTER X.

OUTCHESTER.—THE GUIARDS.

THE kitchen at Outchester was the very *beau idéal* of a farmhouse kitchen. It was a large oblong room paved with square red bricks, which this night were scrubbed as clean and bright as two pair of stout hands could make them. At one end was a huge fireplace, wide enough and deep enough to cook for all the inhabitants of the hamlet, which indeed it did, with some scores of reapers in addition in the harvest time. On either side of this great fireplace, and under the wide projecting chimney, there were comfortable seats, where, on the long winter nights, the shepherd lads who lived in the house might be found knitting or darning stockings, or learning from some more skillful practitioner how to cobble their shoes.

Though they could not so well be observed at night, the windows were small, and so deeply set in the immensely thick wall, that each formed, as it were, a little chamber, where the young people could find a snug, comfortable, and out-of-the-way place on occasions when the whole of the inhabitants were gathered for any special purpose. The kitchen, in fact, was almost just as it had been in the old bastille, or border tower, of the moss-trooping times, and the only perfect relic of the building which the Reivers of the Middle Ages had erected on the more ancient foundations of the Romans. It required no great stretch of fancy, indeed, to people it with the rude and barbarous cooks of those warlike times, busily engaged in preparing savoury messes from the plundered herds of some Scottish baron or English neighbour, as the case might be. The roof was arched, so that the whole place had the appearance of a great vault, and, for a wonder, was much higher than the roof even of the best rooms in the house. It was a perfect picture, a most appetising one any way, for it was studded all over with iron hooks, from

which depended huge flitches of bacon and hams, both bacon and mutton, carefully encased in clean white linen slips, to protect them from the dust and air. On one side was an enormous dresser and bink, the shelves of which were loaded with heavy, ancient, large patterned dishes of delf ware, wooden and pewter trenchers and bickers, and vessels of various kinds, all resplendent to-night. On the other sides of the apartment were heavy oaken forms, settles, and stools, arranged close alongside the walls, so that the whole centre of the floor might be clean for the reception of the expected visitors. The chimney, the deep-projecting ribs of the vaulted roof, the corners of the bink, and indeed every place where a pretty good taste would warrant holly branches or wreaths of ivy to be hung, were richly decorated with the deep glossy green leaves; and right in the centre, facing the fireplace, from a vacant hook there swung a goodly branch, with which the mystic mistletoe was intertwined. It was a picture this, such as Edward Archbold had never seen before, and had not the slightest idea of seeing here. It is

said that "home-keeping youths have ever homely wits." May be so. Perhaps all this was very homely; but Ned thought it looked very bright and cheerful, and by no means wanting in taste or picturesqueness either, though devised and carried out by such thoroughly home-bred people as Marion Arnold and her maidens.

After they had been admiring the place and its decorations for a little, a knock was heard at the entrance. One of the servants went to the door and asked, "Who's there?" — for it seemed there were certain formalities that required to be observed, — to which was answered, "Let us in, we're a' friends." The maiden then drew back the bolt, and with the more pithy than elegant phrase of "Come in, if yer feet be clean," invited the said friends to enter. When the door was opened, a crowd of heads was seen relieved against the white snowy mantle that covered all without, and, headed by the fiddler, the guisards prepared to march in. The fiddler, a fine, tall, athletic young ploughman, groaning at that time, as it seemed, under an enormous and very ancient cocked hat, garnished with yel-

low tape where once it had borne gold lace, was playing something that was meant for a march, while his followers were doing their best to look grave, and to keep time to his strains; but before the musician had left the threshold one of his company advanced with a great heather besom in his hand, and began most laboriously and industriously to sweep the spotless floor, which having finished he gave place to the leader and his companions, and they marched in round the kitchen until better than a score of stalwart lads were within. The rear was brought up by all the people of the town: any way, all the girls and lads were there, and when the chief character, who acted as master of the ceremonies, had saluted Mrs. Arnold and the other residents of the house, and presented each with a glass from their bottle, after a little bustling, whispering, and tuning of the fiddle, they were ready to begin. Every one of the company proper had some sort of disguise—very homely imitators of more stylish masquerades they certainly were, and very queer and primitive their disguises it must be allowed. Some wore coats of a cen-

tury and a half old, with tow wigs of home manufacture, powdered after a very peculiar fashion; and if they could complete their costume with any sort of *outré* hat it was a great matter indeed. Some wore the petticoats and the caps, or mutches, of their sisters and sweethearts; and others, again, like so many Malvolios, gloried in cross-gartered stockings, or in hosen of various colours, red and blue, or white and black. The appearance of every one was more or less grotesque; but they did not seem to have adopted their dresses or disguises at hap-hazard, or at the dictate of their own fancy. There were special functionaries, and special dresses for these functionaries, and, according as their fathers for perhaps many generations had done before them, they played their parts now. Marion, as she pointed out the various characters to Edward, told him also that these old-fashioned coats and hats and other paraphernalia were a sort of heir-looms in the hinds' families, and though the gift of guising did not descend, as that of legislation does in the direct line or family, the dresses were pre-

served and used by the person chosen to take the part for the season. However, there was no attempt at anything dramatic; if the various characters had once so acted as performers in the old mysteries, all that seemed now forgotten, and they contented themselves with a few simple hearty dances in place of the mummeries of the olden time.

But one of them, who gloried in a red leg and a blue one, and a dress gorgeous with yellow and red braid, such as he dressed his horses with for a ploughing match or a show day, advanced and led Mrs. Arnold out to the dance. Edward had now the opportunity, as he saw the guisards choosing partners, of forestalling them all, and asking Marion, to the evident disappointment of more than one young fellow. Soon now the floor resounded to the fall of the heavy feet and the exhilarating snap of the fingers, and emphatic "hugh," as the great strong men and sonsy damsels turned, and twisted, and leaped about in all the mazes of an eightsome reel. It was no make-believe, their dancing. They meant dancing, and they did it *con amore*.

At first Edward was rather puzzled with the figure, and the way in which they were crowded; but the figure was simple enough, and he soon got into it with such a partner, and the crowd only made them all the merrier. Mrs. Arnold was the life of the party for a few minutes, but then she withdrew to a side, one of the maidens took her place, and the fun became more fast and furious, till a halt had to be called from sheer want of breath and exhaustion. Then Mrs. Arnold, Marion, and the young men — Edward carrying a salver of cake to be one of the party, and hearing many “blessings on his bonny face” from the elder women — went round the party and regaled all who were present, young and old. It was pleasant to see the kindly feeling which seemed to pervade all the company, and the respect at the same time which was paid to the mistress, though almost every one there was perfectly familiar; still she was the mistress, and the cheery, hearty way in which the healths of all the family were given, and the buzz of applause and approval which went round, and which would have been cheers in

another place, was very pleasing both to see and hear.

But the guisards have a long round of calls to make and many more houses to visit, and therefore they must proceed with the finishing dance, and then go away—the cushion dance, as it is called; perhaps it is generally well known; but Edward Archbold had never seen it, or even heard of it before that night, and of course was eager enough, especially as he entered with spirit into all the fun of the time, to see and take part in it. He was rather astonished to see a pillow brought into the kitchen, and still more so when he observed the first couple, after dancing round alone, kneel down on it and kiss each other, and then one of them—the leader with the red and yellow legs it was—retired, and Mrs. Arnold, who had been his partner, made choice of Edward, and after another progress round the room with him knelt again and kissed him; moreover, in both cases, as the couple passed the fiddler, they dropped some money into a hat which was set before him. Edward caught in a moment the spirit of the dance, and was not slow

to profit by the opportunity; he immediately led out Marion, and, after another circuit, had the pleasure of saluting the fair girl. So on it went, one after another appearing and disappearing from the floor amid the mirth and laughter, the jokes and sly remarks, of those standing around. It could easily be seen who were the favoured individuals of the several choosers. Whoever made a choice of a partner, when it came to the person chosen's turn, it was invariably the one preferred above all others that the young people led out, though by the mixture, indiscriminate of those who were only as yet sweethearting with the more sedate married people, more scope was given to the fun of the whole assembly by the awkward anticipations sometimes made of the secret wishes or purposes of those who had yet to follow, and who were thus, greatly to their chagrin, and to the increased merriment of the bystanders, forestalled, it being generally pretty well known by the neighbours around what was the state of matters among the young people. This merry dance over, the guisards departed on their

route to the neighbouring farm-houses to re-act the same scenes, and, in most cases, to be as kindly welcomed; for the visit of, and hospitality to, the mummers of the Christmas time was an ancient institution of the countryside.

When Mrs. Arnold and the young people had returned to the parlour, she began to ask Edward what he thought of the play.

"Ye'll no ha'e been accustomed to sic things, Mr. Archbold, I reckon," she said. "But you see it's the way o' the place, and a' that come to the district just fa' into it naturally. I thought it a bit strange at first, mysel'."

"Why, I never saw anything like it before, I must say," Edward answered; "but I fancied it very kindly and pleasant. People are so much bent on money-making now-a-days that they can't spare time for the old amusements. What would Mr. Morton think if a score or two of his men were to go to his house in such a way, John, do you suppose?"

"Oh, there's little chance of that at present, any way. But if a party of his men

were to go in a friendly, kindly spirit, like as these lads have come here to-night, I haven't the least doubt that he would make them very welcome."

"Ay, mayhap by and by that may come to pass. There is the beginning of a change for the better already," Edward answered; "but you know well that this strike will put dispeace and jealousy between masters and men in Grasaig for years to come. But don't you see how great is the contrast? Here are your father's workpeople so happy and contented, and so full of fun, if you like, that they can't keep it to themselves, but wish others to join them in it. It is the first thing we have seen coming here; and only three or four days ago we had striking evidence of what our fellows in Graisaig want."

"Truly," Mr. Arnold said, "it was strikin' enough, that."

"What would Miss Annie have thought of this affair, do you think, Edward?" asked Frank, who did not admire the shop turn the conversation was taking.

"Or Blue-Eyes with your proceedings," John whispered, somewhat maliciously. "I

shall have a fine account to give of you when we get back again."

"Oh, I know that. Well, Frank, never mind what that old fellow pretends to whisper. I only wish Annie had been here; she would have rejoiced in it very much. It is quite the sort of affair for her. Don't you think so, John?"

"Why, how should I pretend to know?" John answered, confusedly; for though it was quite unintentional on Edward's part, it looked something like a wish to turn the tables upon himself. "All young people, especially lassies, like dancing; don't they? What do you say for your side, Marion?"

"In our country here I dare say they mostly do; but I fear Miss Archbold would not much have liked such partners as we could furnish, or such dances as our people dance. But have you told Mr. Archbold of the out-of-door sports there usually are, John?"

"No, not yet; there's nothing very pleasing about them, I fancy. The parish feast is on the twenty-seventh, Ned,—St. John's Day, you know—there's one or two curious

things you'll see done then, though they are rough enough in all conscience."

"Hoot, John," said Mrs. Arnold, "dinna grudge the lads a day's sport now and then; it's no sae often they have the chance. You see, Mr. Archbold, every parish here about has its feast. They dinna heed much about Easter and Whitsuntide as they do farther south; but every village has its ploy, for a' that."

"And generally on or about the day of the saint, to whom in the awd time the church has been dedicated," Mr. Arnold said, "though not one in a hundred knows or cares about that. Just like the wakes in the Midland Counties, it's a day on which families, who have been separated a' the year, gather thegither, and though such things as the election of the mayor and the gaudy loup are rough enough now, they lead ye back to very awd times, and to a very different state of society from what we have now."

"The mayor!" Edward exclaimed. "Why, he must be the present local representative of the lord of misrule, the governor of the sports and gambols of the

season. We often read of that character in the olden times."

"Yes, and it shows how thoroughly these things have taken hold of the people's minds. The form remains when the reality has entirely passed away," Mr. Johnson said, looking up from the book he was pretending to read. "Once these guisings, these lords or mayors of misrule, boy-abbots or boy-bishops, played their pranks, and led their companies into the very church itself; and even the very ceremonies of the church were travestied by them, with the full sanction and approval of the priests and monks. Now it is only in such quiet secluded districts as this that they maintain their footing at all."

"You'll say that it is indeed only the form that remains if you care to see the farce, Sir," said Frank. "The mayor is not now the ruler and leader of the feast, but generally the person who has most degraded himself during the day, or whom the crowd can take the greatest liberties with. It is an honour which few in their sober senses covet, I can assure you."

"Few, indeed! and the fewer the better,"

said the mistress. "It's nae pretty sight at ony time to see a fou man; but to see one made a show of, and carried about the village, is a very sad one."

"But there's no need of frightening you, Ned, with the mayor. We won't have you elected, lad," John cried. "We shan't even go there unless you wish it, for the parish church is a good few miles away, and the election takes place early in the day, too; but you can see what they call the gaudy, or the gawky loup."

"What may it be?" asked the minister.

"A very fuilish thing," Mrs. Arnold answered. "There's a wide ditch in a plantation near the old church and castle, on the moor above Hetton, which all the men who have been married during the year are compelled to leap across on the feast days: a strange custom and a fuilish, I judge."

"Yes, strange enough, but amusing," said John, "to those who like rough sports and practical jokes, for the boys have generally taken good care to dam up the ditch, so that it is full of mud and water; and if the weather be frosty they take care to keep the ice broken and make a regular puddle

for those who fail in clearing it at one spring; but any one can get off by paying a small fine."

The night was reverently brought to a close by the old man, the usual devotions assuming an expression of thanksgiving for the guidance and safe arrival of those who had come that night to the house, and then they separated for the night.

CHAPTER XI.

EDWARD ARCHBOLD AT OUTCHESTER.

"WHAT say you about going to church this morning, Edward?" asked Frank, when they were seated at breakfast on the Christmas morning. "You know, of course, that there is no service in our own church, and the parish church is a long way off; still you would perhaps like to go; if so, we can manage it without much difficulty, I fancy."

"Yes, I should like to go; but I'm quite at your disposal to go any where you like, or do anything," Ned answered.

"Na, na, Mr. Archbold," said Mrs. Arnold, "ye maun just say what you would like best, make up your mind for yersel'; if ye wish to gang, guid and weel, if no, we'll be able to amuse ye at hame here."

"Oh, let us go by all means," said Frank. "The parish church is a good bit away, it

is true; but we'll see some part of the country, and it's the right thing for this day, too, to go to church."

"Be it so then," Edward responded. "We shall have to set off soon, I suppose, shall we not?"

"There need be nae hurry," said the mistress. "Ye can ride, I reckon, Mr. Archbold? but who's a' to gang, will you, John?"

"I think not to-day, Mother; I want to stop at home with you and Marion, and I don't suppose anybody else will care to go. You have still the ponies, Father; you can mount them both, I suppose?"

"Yes," Mr. Arnold answered.

Edward regretted very much his precipitancy when he found that Marion was likely to stay at home, and would very willingly now have drawn back if he could have got a chance to do so; but the ponies were ordered to be got ready. Edward was a very impressionable young man, and was already greatly attracted by the beauty, the artlessness, and the kindness of Marion, and doubtless would much have preferred her as a companion to Frank, at least with Frank. Al-

most the engaged lover of Maggie Barnard he still could not help greatly admiring Marion Arnold, and was most anxious and desirous to show her all the attention that he could, partly because she was the daughter of his hosts, the sister of his friends, and partly because of her attractive beauty and manners. Indeed, to any girl so gentle and so engaging Edward could not be otherwise than attentive. Yet he was no flirt, he had been greatly struck on the previous night with the pretty face and handsome figure of the country lassie, and surprised and delighted with the propriety and simplicity of Marion's manners, so different from the town girls with whom he had all his life associated, and he could not help contrasting, not in the most favourable way, the scenes of late with Maggie, her almost obstinate sullenness, with Marion's frankness and sincerity. Maggie would have had good reason to be displeased, and greater to fear, if she had known the dangerous attraction there was for the excitable Edward Archbold here in this quiet country place.

"You asked if I could ride, Ma'am?" said

Edward, addressing Mrs. Arnold; "well, it's not easy for me to say whether I can or not. I'm somewhat like the Irishman, I fancy, I don't know, because I never tried, or at least next to never. Well, as they say in the shop, I can never learn younger, I must e'en try now, only Frank will have to take it easy, and give me plenty of time. I should hardly like to go to church, or come back here with a broken nose, and I fancy that the chances are that I should reach the ground fast enough, if Frank means going at a great pace."

"Oh, never fear, we'll take it coolly; but remember, we can take the trap if you like, it's just as easy the one as the other."

"No, no, it will be something to say that I've been once on horseback, any way, even if I do ride like a tailor. When shall we start then?"

"Whenever you're ready. You'll see a good many of the peculiar features of our country, Edward, on your road," said John, "and nobody can better point them out, especially the ancient places, than Frank. The church is very old, and within a hundred yards of it there is a famous old castle,

which is still inhabited, and besides these you have to pass other ancient relics of the feudal times, old towers and castles. Oh, you're sure to enjoy your ride very much."

The breakfast over, the young men went out, John accompanying them to see them off. When Edward had reached the front of the house, John again spoke:—

"I should have gone with you, Edward, but I have something to do at home, which must be done to-day, so you will please excuse me. I'll be at your service after this, though. Now you could not perceive this last night, what do you think of the scene now, doesn't it come up to what I have told you, covered over with snow as it is?"

"Why, I don't remember that you have told me anything, any way only very little, but if you haven't Annie has. I suppose you thought what you have said to her was said to me, eh, John? Well, you do have a sweep of country before you here, there is no mistake about that; it must be very pleasing and beautiful when clothed in its green summer robes."

"It is, indeed! But you can form a good idea, even now, of the features of the coun-

try, and can make out its villages and farm-towns quite as well, if not better, than when the leaves are on the trees. You can sweep the whole eastern border line between the hills and the sea from this spot, as an eagle could do from his eyrie."

"Yes, and by all accounts for that same reason the Roman eagles were here planted; but it is grand to see such a stretch of country all dotted over with residences. But what hills are those to the left?"

"That's Cheviot, the famous Cheviot; and here away, more in front, you see faintly that lower offshoot of the range, the low tree-clad hill of Flodden, so fatal to Scotland; and there, more to the right, you will see another scene as extensive, though it wants the curling smoke, the scores of villages, hamlets, and manor-houses to give it tokens of life. Come this way a bit, and you shall see for yourself."

They walked about a couple of hundred yards to the right, to a small conical tree covered height high above the river, the banks of which were here quite precipitous and bare, forming what is called a scaur. The hill itself was of a very peculiar shape,

rising dome-like to a considerable elevation above the level fields, and the small clump of trees on its top, like the war tuft on the head of a red Indian, distinguished it, and made it a landmark far and near. Across the border in the Merse it was seen distinctly, and it commanded seaward the whole stretch of coast country. Marion's taste had been at work here, and on the top was built a little bower covered with climbing plants of the district. Here on the summer evenings she could be alone, if she so wished it, and yet close at hand; and there, full before her, lay the castle and beautiful village of Bamborough; near at hand the green luxuriant country; and beyond the swelling ocean studded with islands. The Fern islets, of such unenviable notoriety, the scene of so many and such fatal shipwrecks, and about very shortly to become famous for the courage and heroism of a woman, Grace Darling, whose nearest relatives lived on this very farm; and Lindisfarne, the Holy Isle, with its ruined castle and monastery, where St. Cuthbert wrought miracles, and the fierce Vikings wrought murder. The sun shone brightly on the

waves with level beams, and the young men see, as they stand and gaze, the plume of black smoke; and then faintly, as the vessel crosses this train of effulgence, the tracery of hull and spars as the steamship ploughs her way through the deep towards the northern capital. In the middle distance the smoke of Berwick, that town famous in ancient times, floats lazily a small round cloud, and beyond all the landward landscape is shut in, from the sea to the mountains, in the far western horizon, where hills and clouds seem to mingle and unite, by the long purple range of the Lammermoors.

Even under the snowy mantle of this Christmas day this is a grand panorama, though it only hints at what it will be at a more genial season. Here are the wide, far-stretching, and beautiful features of nature on a grand scale. Mountain and plain, hill and valley, sea and river, all combine to form the magnificent whole. While within a narrower circle there are to be noticed the gaunt skeletons of ancient strengths, the ruins of baronial castles, of bastiles, peels, and defencible houses. Even in the far distance the rugged outline of an ancient

fortalice of great strength can be discerned, as it peers gloomily down on "Tweed's silver stream," and frowns in grim defiance on all gainsayers, whencesoever they may happen to come.

"Yes, it is a grand scene," Edward said very quietly. He had not been at all prepared for anything like this, and this new phase had taken him completely by surprise. "You ought all of you to be poets, brought up amidst such beautiful scenery, in such a classic land too, with hills and valleys, mountains and the ocean, the rivers and the woods, all before you; and besides all those natural beauties, those time-worn masses of stone and lime, those ancient battle-fields. Why, John, I wonder you're not a poet!"

John laughed. "I'm afraid I must leave all that sort of thing to others," he said, "to Frank and Marion, or to you, though you're not in the category proper. My poetry must be of the hardest kind; I've heard dancing called the poetry of motion, well, I suppose engineering may be called the music of action, but not without being its poetry as well."

"Very discordant and uncouth then in

some of its flights, it must be confessed," Ned answered. "However, it answers its own end, and accomplishes a great purpose, and even poetry does no more."

"Well, well," said Frank a little impatiently; "but we must see the propriety of action, if we wish to reach Hetton in time for church this morning; the poetry can stand till after we get back, so come along, Edward."

"They returned to the front of the house, where two handsome, well-sized ponies were standing ready for the equestrians, Frank and Edward. The latter, quite a novice in the art of horsemanship, wished to mount on the wrong side, much to the amusement of the people who were standing at the corner of the cottages looking on; and when set right in that particular, went as far wrong, and more ludicrously so still, in another way; by putting his right foot in the stirrup instead of the left one, he found himself with his face towards the horse's tail, and only observed that such would be the case in time to avoid actually being in the saddle in that singular position. Joining heartily in the laugh which

arose at his awkwardness, he at last got fairly mounted, and they set off soberly. As may well be supposed, Edward did not cut a very dashing figure on horseback, and when Frank, whether unthinkingly, or of *malice prépende* — Edward could not tell — at last set off at a good round trot, which Edward's pony, too high-spirited to allow itself to be beaten, and by no means relishing the awkward rider it carried, first joined in, and then increased to a gallop, Ned was fain to cling to the saddle and cry to Frank to halt.

CHAPTER XII.

MARION'S TROUBLES.

"WHAT say you to a walk up the water side, Marion?" John said, when he returned to the parlour, after seeing Edward and Frank away to church. "Come, if you've got your morning's work done, put on your bonnet. I'm wearying to get down to the river's side again, and to have a long talk with you. Come, lassie."

"Yes, John, in a minute I'll be ready," Marion answered; "but don't you think mother may wish and expect that you'll stay with her to-day? She seemed pleased when you said you would stay at home with her and me."

"Well, so I mean to do; but if we go up the river a bit, we shall still be at home; and besides, she'll be busy for a good long

while to come. Come, Marion, lassie, I have much to tell you."

Marion knew that he had much to learn as well as to tell, and that it was herself alone that must be his teacher. But though for many weeks she had been longing, eagerly wishing for his coming home, and for such an opportunity as this, now that it offered she felt greatly afraid of a tête-à-tête with him, and could not see her way at all, nor knew what to say. There are some things which only the direst necessity will induce one to confide to another, however innocent the affairs or feelings be in themselves. Marion was now in this predicament; she wished John's advice and counsel, but how to state what grieved her, how to make known her troubles to him, she could not clearly discern. As she put on her bonnet and mantle and prepared to accompany him, she pondered and considered what she should do, and at last, after thinking that this and again that other would be the better way of breaking the subject, she ran down stairs less prepared than ever, and only resolved to let things take their own course, to trust

more to some fortuitous occurrence than to any premeditated plan.

"I thought you had forgotten me, Marion," said John, as she took his arm, and they went down the steep zig-zag path to the river's side. "I thought you were never going to come, and I have been wearying so long to see you; for, Marion, the last few months have been times of change to us all."

"They have so, John," Marion sighed, and looked down. "Your home-coming has been as joyous; we have longed for it, perhaps more than ever—but not one of us has the same light heart that we used to have; I fancy that even you have grown graver, and you were always grave. Frank most assuredly has."

"Yes, Marion, since we last left Outchester great changes have come over us both. Perhaps greater to Frank than me. I have only been carrying out my long-settled and avowed purposes, and so far with profit to myself and approval from my employers; and I feel that I am on the right road. Frank has also come to a decided resolution, and has been working

on it for nearly a year, and has some strange things to tell before we leave home again. And you, Marion, what has come over you?"

"Oh, John, what should come? very little!"

"But Marion, dear, you must not say so; both of us, Frank as well as I, have noticed that something was the matter. There has a change come over your letters, they are not like what they used to be; there is a decided change in your appearance, also, and you must tell me what has caused it all."

"Perhaps there is, John, perhaps I have changed. I fancy I have had cause, any way; but how can I speak of it, or blame in anything those who do love me so well, and out of their great love and desire that I should be happy alone cause me this trouble?"

Marion was weeping now, clinging with both her hands to John's arm, and scarcely able to speak for the great sobs that heaved her breast and shook her frame.

"Marion, dear, tell me what does, what has distressed you so much. It can be no

little thing, I know well. You need have no secrets from me, I suppose, you know that I am aware of the great one; now tell me, dear lassie, what is the cause of this distress; is it that engagement that troubles you?"

"Yes, partly; but more indirectly than directly. Not that I regret it, but that others do, and would be better pleased that I should break it than with almost anything that could happen."

"But who are the others, Marion? There's no other persons in the world that you need care for but our own family, unless it be Harry's. Surely none of them have wanted you to break your promise to him? No, that can't be, I don't think they know much about it, for my part."

"No, it's not them. It's those who love me better than their own lives, I do believe, —mother and father, I mean. Mother doesn't like long engagements, and never liked our engagement; and, indeed, will not believe that there is any more than a mere peradventure between us; and, John, though mother does not mean it, yet she persecutes me, and urges, and would have me to put

him out of my thoughts — as if that was so easy done.”

“ But why, Marion, that’s so unlike mother, why does she wish you to do so ? she must have some good reason one would think.”

“ It is, indeed, so unlike her that it makes it all the harder for me to bear now. She’ll tell you her reasons herself, I cannot. At first, perhaps, it was because there were so few letters from Harry, but latterly there has been another reason.”

“ Well, Marion, will you just answer my questions; perhaps you’ll do that, though you won’t tell me plainly why mother urges you so. Has this young priest anything to do with it ? ”

“ Perhaps he has: mother, and father too, think very highly of him.”

“ Has she — my mother I mean,” — John blushed and felt half ashamed to ask such a question, but after a slight pause went on, — “ spoken of him to you, Marion dear, spoken of him, as a — a — pooh, pooh, you know what I mean ? ”

“ Yes, John, she has, and in such a way,

too, that grieved me more than I can tell you."

"Has Mr. Johnson ever done so, ever spoke of such things to you, or even hinted anything of the sort?"

"Oh no, Mr. Johnson is an honourable, good man, and wouldn't willingly distress me, of that I'm sure; but he used to walk with me to Church, and come back with me, and you know the folk and their talk. He has always been very attentive to me, and I admire and esteem him very highly, both as a preacher and a good man; but he has never said or done anything, but what I fancy any well-bred man might do; perhaps I feel more annoyed at his attentions, from the way the people talk, than I should do."

"I'm glad to hear that," John said, more cheerfully; "and it is only my mother then that vexes you, mother and the country clashes, is that all; and father, does he take any part?"

"Father says little; but, whenever mother has been speaking, urging me to receive Mr. Johnson's attentions more cheerfully and pleasantly, and hinting what a

great blessing it would be to have him always connected with the family, to have him one of it indeed, and when she says how much better it would be if I was to settle down quietly and soon at home, and not have to go away at all, father says little, but while

‘My mother pleaded sair, though my faither didna
speak,
He look’d in my face till my heart was like to
break.’

I’ve changed the persons in the song, but so it has been sometimes, while I’ve been alone with none to comfort me,” and Marion sobbed again as if in verity her heart would break.

“In short—now Marion don’t be angry with me—they both would like you to become, if possible, the wife of the young priest. But, do you think he has ever spoken to them about such an affair? he hasn’t to you, you say?”

“I don’t know, indeed, mother often speaks as if quite assured; but Mr. Johnson, though more attentive and anxious to please me than I like, has never said a word

to me. If he only had, if I could only have had such an opportunity of enlightening him as that would have given me, I believe he is so much a gentleman, that he would cease to be so special in his notice."

"Well, that may be brought about too, perhaps; what grieves one is, that mother should be against Harry Grey now. Poor fellow, far away in a dangerous service, it would be a terrible thing for him if he knew this, and worse if anything should come of it; but you're not fairly betrothed to him, Marion?"

"John!" she exclaimed with a sudden start, and withdrawing her hand from his arm while she raised her eyes to his face, and her pale cheek flushed, "I didn't expect that you, above all, would speak in that way; you, his dearest friend! Not engaged? no, save by honour; but that is enough for him and me."

"Hush, Marion dear, you misunderstand me; but you have just told me what I wished to know, there's been no formal engagement, only a tacit one, you both understand each other. Well it's not fair of mother to vex you now; however much

she might desire another match for you. But don't vex yourself any more, we must try and have this put to rights directly."

"Ah, John, it is easy to say don't vex, don't fret yourself, but mind I'm at home alone with my mother, and a continual dropping is said to pierce through the hardest rock; just think how this continual dropping is piercing my poor heart, ay, and worse than that, I sometimes feel—God forgive me therefor—evil feelings rising up within me, and have to put constraint on myself, to prevent me returning an angry reply to her. Oh! John, if you would think how we, my mother and me, have lived; I never, scarcely even now, have had a thought she didn't know, and now to find such a spirit rising up within me grieves my very heart. It is so terrible where you have had once an assured refuge in every kind of trouble, to which you could flee for comfort, to discover that it had ceased to be so, and that the former protector had become the persecutor."

"Marion, Marion, these are terrible words to use of mother."

"I know they are, and yet they are the

only ones I can think of to explain the feelings I have so often to struggle against. God help me and forgive me, but this struggle with the evil spirit is doing me more harm than you can fancy; for I know it is love for me, desire for my welfare, however much mistaken, that prompts mother to act so, and makes her so earnest with me."

"I have no doubt of it, Marion dear, but I have been thinking for some time back to get you away from Outchester for a time, to go back with me, and keep house for me, Marion. The change of scene and people would do you much good, and then for a while, at least, it would release you from this struggle and these troubles. What do you think of that, Marion?"

"I don't know! I fancy neither father nor mother would listen to it for a moment."

"I know it would do you good in health, and spirits both. Oh, Marion, I could have cried yesterday when I saw you so thin; both Frank and I are very anxious about this, because in any circumstances it

would do you good to see a little more of the world, and people like yourself, than you can ever see here at Outchester, we're both bent on it."

"Oh! but, John, my health is good enough; mind, I have not finished growing yet, and I'm a good deal taller since you were here last; it is that perhaps that makes you think me thinner than I was."

"Well, well! whatever it is, it would be a great thing for you to come with me for a time; you would be able to learn something of the ways of the world, and Edward's sister Annie would be so happy and pleased to show you all she knows, many, many things you don't think of, and could never see here: had you ever a friend of your own age, Marion?"

"Never since I left school, you might have known that, John! I know plenty of girls, but scarcely ever see them; and there is not one that I could make a friend of. I would like to have a friend like myself, it would be a positive luxury. You never have said much about Miss Archbold since you wrote me of your first meeting with her, tell me about her now."

"She is just your own age, Marion," he said, blushing deeply, as he caught her eye fixed upon him. "Very like Edward, just a feminine edition in fact. A frank, sensible, honest girl, and if you had seen how eager she has been to hear all about Northumberland, and about you, and all the rest, you would have been both surprised and pleased."

"Indeed!" Marion smiled faintly—was John getting into that predicament too? she thought. "She'll be as much town bred as her brother, I suppose."

"Quite so, much more even; that is, she knows less of the country than he does, but she does like to hear of country things, and country people and places. Had it been as needful for her to have left Grasaig, as it was for Edward, I shouldn't have had the same difficulty with her, I had with him."

"You must have great influence with her then, it would appear; but we had better go up now, mother'll be wearying, and wondering why we are away so long. But, John, I should much like to know Miss Archbold; you needn't fear, if things

otherwise be agreeable, that I'll need much pressing to go with you. Come, let us go now."

"Well, if you think so, I think I can persuade mother. I'll make the trial any way."

"Some months ago, I shouldn't have been very willing. Of course I always should have liked — as who would not? — to see somewhat of a different kind of life from this of ours at Outchester, and even then would have been pleased to go for a time. Now I have that other reason it will be better, I shall be freed from mother's urgings, and father's pleading looks; yes, John, I'm willing to go."

"Now then for mother's consent. I must do as a great warrior did, Marion, take you all, one by one, and vanquish you in detail."

Marion and he returned to the house, where the mother was eager to have him beside her, while Edward was absent, and the young minister engaged in his own room.

CHAPTER XIII.

MOTHER AND SON. — A CONVERSATION.

"MOTHER, I've been greatly grieved with the change that has come over our dear Marion."

"What mean ye, John?" said Mrs. Arnold, starting in alarm. "There's nothing the matter wi' the bairn that I ever heard tell o' or ha'e seen."

"Why, possibly you may not have noticed it, but both Frank and I have. Marion is neither so well in health nor in spirits as she was, and it's come to pass quite lately too. We both of us could have cried when we saw how thin she looked yesterday."

"And me no to see it? Hoot, it maun be a' a fancy; Marion has never complained, and certainly I ne'er saw onything wrong, John. I fancy a mother's een are as sharp and quick as yours."

"Perhaps so, Mother; but we have one standard to judge by that you haven't. We can contrast her appearance now with what it was so many months ago, which you cannot do; and it's not only her appearance, but her very letters — though she never said a word of anything being amiss with her — told us both plainly that some change had taken place, some cloud had come over her bright spirit. Mother, do you know, can you guess what has caused this?"

"I've said that I dinna see ony change, and I dinna knaw ony cause there is for a change. The dear bairn! her to be dwin- ing and me no ken o't. John, your only trying to frighten me."

"No, Mother, not in the least. Marion's letters formerly used to be so bright and cheerful, but latterly they've been sad and melancholy, and have grieved our very hearts."

"Bless me! the dear bairn, and her never to say onything to me about it. Can she be grievin' about him that's awa; will it be that makes her sad, though mind I havena noticed it?"

"Perhaps so, in part; but I don't think it's that altogether. She might have become so, after she heard that Harry's ship was sent to the war in China. But indeed, ever since the young priest had been a short time here they have been so. Can he have insulted or annoyed her in any-way, Mother, do you think?"

"Mr. Johnson insult Marion! Ye little know him, John, to even sich a thing to him; he's just the very opposite; the maist attentive man I e'er saw; he would do ony-thing for the lassie. Him insult her! No, no, John, that's impossible."

"I am very glad to hear it, Mother; yet it seems strange that this melancholy should have begun to appear in Marion's letters just after he came here. In a case like Marion's, his attentions, if marked, must be at least very painful to her."

"Never fear that, lad, all lassies like attention frae the lads; and when it's a man like Mr. Johnson — of his character and cloth, I mean — they're proud enough of it in an ordinary way."

"Perhaps so; but these peculiar attentions may, for all that, be displeasing to

Marion. Mother, dear, remember how she stands in regard to another person, whom you liked well once, and only parted from so short a time ago. Marion may be proud that Mr. Johnson admires her — who wouldn't do so that saw her, indeed? — but she may be annoyed and hurt, at the same time. Anyway, she's not the same happy, light-hearted girl she used to be, that's clear enough."

"It's a great pity, John, that she e'er saw your awd friend, and a greater that ever he courted her; but they say time works wonders. She's no bound to Harry Grey, nor him to her; they may baith change their minds; and surely if she did, and would fancy Mr. Johnson, it would be a great blessin' — a far way better thing than waiting the dear knows how lang till Harry comes back — if he e'er comes — may be only to care nought about her."

"Mother, mother, you don't wish that should happen, surely. It is for the very purpose of winning a station and a comfortable home for the dear lassie that Harry went away. His last thoughts and last words, that wild February morning,

were of Marion, and Frank and I both promised never to forget what he was so anxious about, but ever to watch over Marion for him. Don't think Harry Grey will change in that respect, or forget Marion."

"May be no; but she may forget him. I dinna want to think ither than kindly o' your awd acquaintance, and I liked him very weel too. But for Marion's awn sake it would be better and wiser if she did forget him: 'a bird in the hand's worth two in the bush,' mind you. It's clear enough to me that the young priest would just do onything for her. My only wish is that she would turn her thoughts that way."

"Has Mr. Johnson ever spoken of such a thing, Mother, either to father or you, that you seem so sure about it?"

"No just in words, may be; but it needs nae seer or prophet to tell what he thinks and wishes; and truly it would be a great match for the dear bairn, and sae near hand too. I wish we could persuade her to be a little mair free wi' the young minister."

"Why, mother, it struck me she behaved

just as she should do to one who was an intimate acquaintance; how should she act otherwise?"

"I would like her to be mair freer, no to be sae cauld and stiff to the young man, as she often is. He's no a common man, mind you, and baith your faither and mysel' like to see him weel attended to, and we would baith be pleased very much if Marion would just look on him as he looks on her; I've telled her that often enough."

"Yes, dear Mother, and it is that which makes her so sad. You used to say that every sigh a person gave was shedding a drop of the heart's blood. Ah, Mother, how many drops has the dear lassie shed these months past! what torture has she not endured, and how her heart must have been bleeding, when you've been speaking to her in that way! Poor dear lassie, with Mr. Johnson showing her peculiar attentions that he ought not to do, — at least as things stand, — and father and you wishing and urging her to take up with this minister, little wonder that she's half heart-broken!"

"John, John, what say you? that my

bairn's heart-broken. Wouldna baith your father and mysel' lay down our very lives for her?"

"Yes, Mother, I know you would; that you love her above your life; but then she's a young affectionate girl, and there's a contest goes on in her heart—love pulling two ways,—love to you, obedience—no, I won't say that, you don't require her to obey at the cost of such suffering as it would cause her—drags her one way; but then love to Harry pulls her in another, and between the two her poor heart is racked and tortured, and both her mind and body therefore suffers."

"John, ye frighten me. One would think I was the harshest and maist cruelest mother i' the country, and that I could take pleasure in the sorrow o' my awn dear bairn."

"No, Mother, I would never think so, nor would anybody who knows you; but though all you say to Marion, and all you wish her to do you think would be for her good, yet it may cause her this torture; and besides every day she fears she will fall into sinful thoughts, and she has to struggle, as she

told me herself, to cast them out of her mind. Once she would have told you her every thought and feeling; but now, dear Mother, can she do so? It would be a dreadful thing for us who are far away to know, aye or even to fancy, that there was not the same confidence between you and her as there used to be."

"What can I do, John, but wish for the bairn's good?—it's my chief thought baith night and day. There never was a better bairn, never a mair obedient, loving lassie on the face o' the Lord's earth than her. We wish her happiness, and that only, and have done sae, mair than for our awn; and when I've spoken to her of the priest it's just because o' that."

"I know it is; but, dear Mother, there are feelings — you know much better than me — that should never be touched. Love cannot be forced like a flower in a hot-house. It comes in its own way, at its own time. Let Marion altogether alone, Mother; if she ceases to love Harry Grey, perhaps she might turn to Mr. Johnson, not that I think so, or would wish it; but I feel sure the most certain way of preventing

such a thing from happening is continually to urge it."

"May be you're right in that, John. Strange we never thought of that. Weel, weel, we awd folk, perhaps, look mair to what we think a good match, as the world goes, than the sort of one we would have made our awnsels?"

"I have another thing to ask you, Mother. I have made some kind friends in Grasaig, the Archbolds especially, and I fancy it would be a good thing for Marion if she were to go back with me for a time."

"Oh, John, dinna speak o' such a thing; whatever 'ud we do without her; she hasna been out o' my sight for a day since ever she was born. I couldna think o' such a thing as that."

"I think you should, dear Mother. You would like Marion to be, if that were possible, the wife of the minister; and wouldn't she be all the fitter for such a station if she saw a little more of the world? I fancy that Harry Grey's station, if he's spared, poor fellow, will be a far wealthier one. In any case, it would improve Marion much, and do

her great good in every way, to see a little of town life, whatever may happen afterwards."

"And she would come back spoiled. Oh, I ha'e seen the like o' that happen before now. There's nae doubt she would be a' the better in one way; but to see her come hame here again fu' o' town's notions and fancies would be death to me."

"No fear of that, Mother; no fear of Marion being spoiled; she's much more likely to spoil here. Has she one companion like herself, one girl that she can call a friend? There's not one; and dearly as she loves you, and you her, it is worth a little sacrifice on both your parts to let her come with me for a while. There is Edward's sister, Annie Archbold, of Marion's own age; she would rejoice at the coming of the dear lassie; and Mrs. Archbold herself, nothing would please her more. Mother, you must make up your mind to let her come."

"Ye'll ha'e it a' your awn way, John; but though I agree to a' you say about the good it might do Marion, it'll be very hard

to pairt wi' her, baith to your faither and mysel', I know that weel."

"I know it too, dear Mother; but when did you ever let your own likings stand in the way of what might be for the good of any of us?"

"Ay, lad, though it was hard to pairt wi' ony of ye, it'll be harder to pairt wi' her; for when ye baith were away, I had aye the dear bairn left, that was one great comfort; but if it's to be for her guid I'll no stand in the way, though I'll feel it sair, sair."

Mrs. Arnold sobbed, and at last, fairly overcome with the idea of the parting, she threw her apron over her head and wept bitterly. John was very much distressed and at a loss what to do, but he waited in silence till the paroxysm should pass away. In a little Mrs. Arnold recovered her composure, and then said —

"Say nae mair i' the now, John. There'll be plenty o' time, and I'll speak to your faither at night about it. Hisht, lad, there's the lassie coming her awnsel."

While this conversation, so specially interesting to Marion, had been going on, she

had been sitting in her own room. At first she was very much agitated and excited by her conversation with John, and she had a notion that the same thing would be discussed now by her mother and him. Thus she sat for a time in her bonnet and mantle, as if she had forgotten to lay them aside. She thought of what John had proposed, and there was doubtless a girlish longing to visit those fresh scenes and places, to mingle with a new class of people, and, over and above all, the desire to escape the daily trouble which her mother's importunities, and Mr. Johnson's marked attentions, caused her. All these things called her to go; but, on the other hand, how could she leave her mother, whose sole companion she was? Marion thought much of how great her mother's loneliness would be if she were gone, and how she would sit and muse, and that she might pine and grow disconsolate, while she was far away. But then came the thought—it is only for a short time; and she fancied how they would all rejoice when she returned, and of how much better she might be qualified then for all her duties than she was now.

Marion at last laid aside her bonnet, and was preparing to go down stairs, when she saw on the toilet-table a small parcel bearing her name. She stood for a little time in wonder; then, taking the carefully-secured packet in her hand, she examined it on all sides, scrutinized the handwriting—she had never seen it before—and tried to guess, as people so often do, from whom it could have come; and then, in still greater perplexity, she pondered how it could have been brought there, and who could have placed it in her chamber. Marion did not open it; she feared it might contain some gift from Mr. Johnson, which it would pain her greatly, in the present circumstances, to accept, and which she could not see how to decline accepting; and she felt her cheek burn with mingled feelings of eager desire to know what it might be, and of indignation that any one should have stealthily entered her chamber to place it there so secretly. To be satisfied, Marion entered the parlour just as her mother had recovered from the passion of tears into which the thought of even a short separation from her darling had thrown her.

"Mother," Marion said, "see, here's a little packet with my name on it; do you know how it came into my room? I found it on my table a little ago, and cannot guess how it either came to be there or who it is from."

"A packet, darling!" Mrs. Arnold exclaimed; "let me see it. Truly, it is strange; but I know naething about it, my dear bairn."

"Why," said John, who had in a moment recognised the little packet Frank had shown him, "the best and easiest way to find out that will be to open it. You're not such a little goose, Marion, as to be afraid of it, as if it came by some improper means, or for a bad purpose, are you?"

"I don't know, it's so strange; it made me tremble and fear too; if I only knew who it could be from I shouldn't, but——"

"Come, you little frightened bird, hand it over to me, and you'll soon see. Just see how anxious mother is. It is true sometimes such sort of parcels have been sent with an evil purpose, but who do you fancy would wish to injure you, little trembler, that you are? If I had found

such a thing in Grasaig, that would have been a different affair altogether. Come, now give it me."

The packet was handed to John. Strange, the very same idea had taken possession of Mrs. Arnold which had flashed into her daughter's mind, that this packet contained a gift from Mr. Johnson; but while the one feared it might, the other hoped it would be so. John very soon dissipated both hopes and fears by breaking the seals and cutting open the wrapper. Within, as a kernel in the husk, was a small box, carefully packed in cotton, on the top of which was a small lady-like note, which John handed to his sister, while he took out the box, and carefully opened it. The articles within dazzled their eyes, and there was a faint cry of astonishment and delight from both mother and daughter, for within the box, on delicate rose-coloured satin, there lay a beautiful little gold watch, and, coiled around it, a very handsome chain, with little seal and key, of the same precious metal. What girl of seventeen but would have been greatly delighted with such a present, more especially a country girl, like Marion?

Ladies with gold watches were exceedingly rare in that country. And Mrs. Arnold looked with pleased eyes on the trinkets too. Who would better become such glittering ornaments than her Marion?

"But who is it from?" she asked. "We can see now what the bonny things are, and they're just beauties; but wha is't, hinny, that's sent them to ye?"

"The note'll tell you, Marion; quick, there's a dear lassie," John said, taking out the watch as he spoke, and throwing the chain around her neck, while he put his arm round her waist, and looked admiringly and lovingly upon the fair girl—"read it, Marion, dear; see how mother is wearying."

Marion opened the little note, and glanced, almost fearfully, for the signature, if there was one; and then, seeing a name she did not know, she read aloud:—

"Dear Miss Arnold,

"Excuse my presumption in addressing one that I never saw, but though that is the case, I imagine that I know you quite well. Your brother Frank has made me well acquainted with you, and your quiet

and happy country life, which I sometimes feel almost inclined to envy you, being shut up in this smoky, noisy, bustling town. I should so like to rin about the braes, to pu' the gowans, or go a-nutting among your woods and braes, and to see you and your dear mother; for I know in the spirit all the good people in Outchester, mother and I having got Frank to tell us all about you, when he comes to see us. He will perhaps tell you what a great service he rendered to papa and me; perhaps not, for he doesn't like to speak about himself; but make him do it. We shall never forget it, any way, for he saved papa's life. Make him tell you about us all, and about me, that you may know me as well as I do you, from his description.

"Please accept of, and wear the inclosed, that you may sometimes call to mind, though you have never seen,

"Your sincere friend,

"MARY CUTHBERT.

"P.S.—But for your dear brother's gallantry, it is most probable that Mary Cuthbert would never have written again."

Marion no longer hesitated to take hold of, to examine, and admire the pretty little watch; all her fears were dispelled, and blushing and proud as any young girl would be, she got John to set it a-going, and put it to the right time; and, for the present at least, the cloud of care was dispelled from her brow. Mrs. Arnold was likewise greatly pleased, perhaps more so than if it had been a gift from Mr. Johnson, for that she knew now would have increased Marion's sadness; and then, her dear Frank was a hero, his praises were precious to the fond mother, and she got the letter, to read over again at her leisure that which so clearly showed how highly this family esteemed the farmer's son, and how mindful, even in such attractive circles, Frank had been of home.

"I don't know much more about these people, mother, than that Frank rendered a service to the father and daughter; she is quite young, younger than Marion, Frank says, for he told me about them, and what he had done; but we must leave that for him to tell you himself."

"It is so kind and mindful of them,"

Marion murmured. "Of course it is for Frank's sake, but the present is all the more precious for that."

John drew her to the other end of the room, and asked in a low tone, "What made you be so afraid, Marion? did you think it was from the young priest, eh?"

"Yes, and it would have made me very unhappy, if it had been. I could not well have refused a present at such a time, and yet it would have been most painful to accept one."

"Well, never mind, lassie; I see mother 'll not refuse to let you go, and I don't think she'll grieve you much more. So you must make haste, and get cheerful and bright again."

John caressed her and kissed her, as if she was yet a little child, and then left the parlour, leaving his mother to what, but for this fortunate incident, would have been an awkward, if not a painful meeting.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD NANNY DARLING.

JOHN's walk did not extend far in the first instance. It was a holiday in the hamlet, and most of the people at home. With the greater part of the elders of the little community he had been acquainted from his earliest days, and it was always one of the features of his return home, a round of visits among them. Thus he meant to occupy himself now: he went from house to house renewing his acquaintance with the inmates: he had been mindful of them when far away; for one old man he had a small coil of tobacco; for an aged matron a small quantity of tea.

"Eh, me! but I'm gled to see ye, John," said an old woman who occupied one of these houses. Old Nanny Darling had the

character of being the most inquisitive person and the greatest gossip in the place, and might, but for her sex, have been called the patriarch of the hamlet. "I kent weel ye wadna be lang o' comin'; an' how ha'e ye been? an' whatna kind o' place ha'e ye been leevin' in? an' how lang are ye gaun to stay?"

"Stop, stop, Nanny; one at a time, if you please?" John answered. "You don't think I can answer all these questions at once, do you?"

"Eh, hinny! but tell us is't true that ye've come a' the way frae the wast sea? The folk say sae; and that maun be some gate near America, I reckon, isn't?"

"No, no, Nanny; hardly so far as that; it's not above twice as far from this, as Outchester is from Newcastle," John replied, laughing at her eagerness. "You've heard of Edinburgh, Nanny?"

"In course I ha'e; it's no abune fifty miles frae the Ca'stream, or frae Kelso; I've heard tell."

"Well, the place, the town I live in, is not much farther from Edinburgh than that, and only a few thousand miles from

America—about a month's voyage, that's all, Nanny."

"An' what kind o' folk are they ye leeve amang? The mistress was saying there had been some disturbance: are they bla'guard folk?"

"Oh! no, Nanny; just like their neighbours—mostly very decent people; but the working men are not pleased with the masters, and they've struck work just now."

"Struck wark; what's that? I aye thought ye tradesfolk wrocht wi' hammers, sae that they aye struck whan warking; but ye mean something else by that, dinna ye?"

"Yes, truly; they've left off work, left the workshops, and they're now going about idle, till the masters agree to do what they want."

"Eh, me! than they'll be playing at gentlemen, like the bairns out bye on the simmer nights. But an' they dinna work, how do they eat? Have they, like the folk spoken o' in the Bible, waxed fat and kicked?"

"Partly so; as for their eating, many of them will be hard enough off for meat to

eat, Nanny; they had good work and left it; and though they get a little money every week from a Society, it's not like the good wages of the old time."

"They maun be fuils; but I dinna wonder at that, born an' biding in a smeekey town, as they dae. It's the first time I e'er heard o' men tryin' to get the upper hand o' the maisters by starvin' themsels; an' it dinna be about the harvest-time, when the shearers are scarce, an' they stick out for big wages; that's the only time I e'er mind o' the maisters gie'in' in to the men."

"Yes, Nanny; and masters of all trades give in, in fact, quick enough at such times; but this isn't one of them. There were more idle tradesmen than there was work for, before the men left work. But what's going on in the country-side, Nanny, you are sure to ken?"

"Eh, I dinna hear oucht, if it dinna be about the young priest. Eh, me! but he's a grand preacher; there ne'er was sich a priest i' the pilpot o' Fordham meeting."

"The folk like him then, Nanny, it seems?"

"Like him! ye may weel say that. He's

better kenned i' the countryside than that awd sinner, Mr. Fraser, himsel'. I can mind the awd priest for a guid fifty years mysel', an' I'm sure the young man has dune mair guid i' fifty days than the awd man's dune a' his time. The folk 'll ne'er be content now, 'cept they get him placed off hand."

"So he is to be, Nanny: he's to be placed next week, isn't he?"

"Ay, it's true, it's e'en sae. Noo, there's me,—I ha'ena been able to gang the length o' the meetin' for mony years, 'cept at the preachin' times; an' ye may guess what a blessin' it is to ha'e him sae near; though, for a' that, he disna ca' on the folk here offener than ithers. He gangs tae every place, and kens a' the short cuts and nighest roads a'ready, as weel as if he'd been born i' the country. It's a great blessin' to ha'e sic a guid priest."

"So it is; but you never used to care much about Mr. Fraser, Nanny, if I mind right?"

"No me; an' wha would? It was better, it was less o' a sin, to stay at hame than to gang a' the way to Fordham and

listen till him; he was aye syne, I mind, as cauld as ice. Ye may say that the folk like the young priest: weel, ye're no far wrang, either; but there's some o' the folk he likes as weel, I can tell ye."

"I dare say that; it's quite natural he should; we're always inclined to like them that think much of us: isn't it so, Nanny?"

"Sometimes; no aye. But a' the folk say that he likes yer sister weel — better than the meetin' — and that he'd gi'e it and the Manse baith, for a kindly blink o' her e'e. But ye'll ken a' that better than me."

"Hush! Nanny; how do you think I should know? I have only known him for a few hours. But what makes you think so?"

"What a' body says maun be true, ye ken; has aye some truth about it, ony gate; an' then he gangs leadin' her about, or used to gang, ony way; an' the folk look as surely for him to marry yer sister Mar-ron as they do that he'll preach as weel after he's placed as he does i' the noo. The awd priest was never married — mair

shame to him — may be, though, there was a reason for that tae; and some o' the awd folk judge it's ower sune for Mr. Johnson to think o' onything o' the kind; but Marron's his choice, ony way, an' she'd make a guid wife for a priest tae, be it sune or syne."

"Well, Nanny, don't you heed what the people say about such a thing as that; there are more than one to the making of every bargain, and mayhap Marion doesn't care about the priest. Folk will speak such nonsense, and meddle with what doesn't concern them in the least degree. It's just a country clash, Nanny, isn't it?"

"May be ye think sae; but I dinna. If e'er a lad likit a lass i' this warld, Mr. Johnson likes yer sister; an' we'd a' be proud to see't a match 'tween the twa. I ken he likes her mair than ye think o'; may be he's only waitin' till he's placed to speak out, if he hasna dune't a'ready."

"Just you mind what I say, Nanny,— that there's two to the making of a bargain, and sometimes more; and, mayhap, what is true enough of the one may not be so of the other."

"Guid sake! ye dinna mean to say that ony lassie wouldna be proud o' the like o' our young priest lookin' after her? There's no ane i' the country but micht be proud to ha'e Mr. Johnson even'd to them: disna yer awn mother look on him as a sòn a'ready? an' it's no sae easy to come ower her, is weel enough kent."

"Perhaps so; I say nothing about that, but just this, that what a' body says mayn't in this case be true. Why, if Mr. Johnson was placed, and married, where could he live? Mr. Fraser's still in the Manse for life, and there's not a house for miles to be got where he could take his wife."

"Isna there the big house there? if Marron and he drew thegither, what for no just bide whar he is? Yer mother wouldna like him ony the waur when he's married upon her daughter. Eh, me! I ne'er thocht o' that before, that he would ha'e to leave the town at some time. It'll be a terrible loss to us awd folk!"

"Don't run away with the notion, Nanny, that it's at all likely there will ever be a match here. Wait patiently; don't fret yourself, and you'll see whatever's to be

seen in good time; but not such a marriage as that, I fancy."

"Weel, dinna ye be ower shure; mair broken ships ha'e come to land, an' I'm certain shure I wish this may. Weel, guid day, if ye will gang; I hope ye'll ca' and see me afore ye gang awa' again."

"I will, Nanny; good-bye. Don't think any more about such nonsense as we've been speaking of than you can help, Nanny. May be, in summer, if we're spared, you'll be talking about me, if I bring a bonny lassie with me to see Outchester then. Good-bye, Nanny."

John left old Nanny in a fever of curiosity. He knew well the peradventure which closed the conversation would in an hour be magnified into a certainty, and that the fresh gossip would soon, for a time at least, supplant the old and well-discussed theme concerning his sister and the minister. John, as he walked rapidly down the river's bank, could not help imagining the form this new subject would take in the gossips' hands. Nanny would certify that he was about to be married to a town's lady—that of course; then the lady would turn out to

be, perhaps, his master's daughter — a favourite form for such affairs to take in the minds of such people—any way, she must be wealthy, and perhaps, with the good-natured, very good and very beautiful into the bargain; and thus would the passing jest be realised and improved upon, till all the countryside would ring with the news that John Arnold was going to be married to a lady, which indubitable fact would be clinched with, "An' he telled awd Nanny Darling sae his awnseel'."

CHAPTER XV.

JOHN AND THE MINISTER.

As John walked up the river side so occupied in thought, and almost felicitating himself on the new turn which would be given to the insatiable craving of the people, he met the young minister. Mr. Johnson had, truly enough, succeeded in securing the goodwill of all the people, and had been elected assistant minister and colleague to old Mr. Fraser. He was very deservedly liked; and now that congregation, which a year ago was without the slightest appearance of life, and certainly, with, it may be, some very few exceptions, without any desire for it, was beginning to awake and to stir. Under the preaching and ministrations of the old priest earnest people had been driven away to other places; and as a great part of these Presbyterian congrega-

tions are hinds, who are changeable in their habits, taking service in one district one year, and away, perhaps, a dozen or a score of miles the next, the congregation had gone on dwindling, becoming small by degrees, and less from year to year. In most cases the new-comers, though Fordham Meeting House was the nearest and most convenient place for them to attend, very generally preferred to walk long, weary miles rather than listen to Mr. Fraser; hence the congregation when first Mr. Johnson came was mostly composed of those who had become so inured to Mr. Fraser's weary wanderings and repetitions that, however much they might like to hear a better preacher and see a better-filled church, they did not care so much for their own sakes as to press the old man to agree to a change; neither could they break through their old habits and forsake his ministry. Therefore the deadness of the people was extreme.

As a church they were quite isolated. The old minister had seen the last of two generations of neighbouring ministers pass away, and the new race, fresh from the mint

of Chalmers and Welsh, were not likely to sympathise or have much in common with one who, nearly three-quarters of a century before, had studied theology during the dearest time of the coldest period of Presbyterian divinity. His neighbours, those of them near enough to visit him, did so, more as if they came to see a curiosity than reverently to visit a father; and it is not to be at all wondered at that he clung all the faster to old methods and old ways.

Mr. Johnson's coming had greatly changed this state of things. His visits to, and intercourse with, Mr. Fraser seemed to have a good effect on the stereotyped nature of the old man himself; and the improvement on the congregation was most marked, both in the steadily-increasing numbers at worship and in the spirit they manifested. Instead of wandering away to distant places, or lounging from house to house at home, spending the day in gossip and feeling it a weariness, the hinds and their employers came out regularly, and, indeed, eagerly, to the Sunday services. The sermons were no longer vague, unmeaning maunderings and repetitions. The people

did not need now to wonder and guess as they went to the meeting—"Whatna one the awd man'll gi'e us the day?" nor, when they were returning home, calculate how often they had heard the same things said within the last six months. Each Sunday there was something new to these people, and treated in a way they had never been accustomed to—something to rouse and quicken their intellects, and to warm their hearts, and please them by the eloquence with which it was put before them. A few months of the new era caused the people to become clamorous for the settlement of Mr. Johnson, and, after a sharp skirmish with Mr. Fraser, who clung tenaciously to the power, the pelf, and the revenue of the chapel, small as it had become, the people gained their point; and Mr. Johnson was now their minister elect, within one week to be their minister in reality, with power to perform all the duties and exercise all the authority of pastor over and among the people, save in the one special thing, the money.

The young minister was returning slowly down the drive from one of his daily visits

to Mr. Fraser, when he met John. Mr. Johnson was so much engrossed with thoughts of the coming time that he would have passed without recognising John, but for a stumble over a stone hidden by the snow, which broke the train of ideas and caused him to look around. What were those thoughts which so deeply engaged him? Very many had occupied his mind, but chiefly one, which at the present moment, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up all the others. When, indeed, should a man be thoughtful, if not in the immediate prospect of being set apart for the special service of the Highest, in the ministry of the Word, and appointed, so far as man can ordain and appoint, to the particular charge and oversight of a much and long-neglected flock? It was the thought of this solemn time and of the increased responsibility which so soon would be laid upon him, that pressed upon his mind, that made his pale but cheerful face become so grave. Thoughts of Marion, if they did intrude and mingle with this chief and special one, would be of a more hopeful nature than ever. This time, so fast approaching, was

the end of his ministerial probation. It might be many years before he succeeded to the full emoluments of the ruined Manse, garden, and globe; but one short week longer, in God's good providence, and the station would be gained. Then, if he could see his way to speak to Marion, he might look forward with greater confidence to receive a favourable answer.

"Ah! Mr. John," he said, "I had nearly passed you. Excuse me, but I have so much to occupy my mind just now that I am very forgetful of many things."

"There is nothing to excuse, Sir, so far as I'm concerned; it is most likely I'm in your way, and disturb you."

John, without knowing or meaning it, was perhaps shorter and sterner in his speech than usual. Notwithstanding the way in which everybody spoke of Mr. Johnson, from old Nanny Darling to Marion, he could not help feeling angry with the minister; he greatly blamed himself for it; but then Mr. Johnson appeared before him just now as the cause, innocent or otherwise, of Marion's melancholy, and as the supplanter of Harry Grey. True,

Mr. Johnson was not, so far as he knew, acquainted with the position in which Marion stood, and had ever been most courteous, gentle, and attentive; but then those very courtesies gave point to the country gossip, and occasion for the entreaties which had so grieved the sweet girl. So John did not feel greatly pleased with the priest at present.

"Are you going up the drive much farther?" Mr. Johnson asked, not heeding, or, at least, not taking notice of the tone of John's answer. "I have just been at the Manse; perhaps you are going up to see Mr. Fraser?"

"No, I think not to-day," John replied; "it is too late now; besides that, I never was much of a favourite with the old minister. I only came out to renew my acquaintance with old friends: first, among the old men and women, and now with the river and its banks. I know every part of it so well, have fished and bathed in it, and forded it so often, that every turn, and bend, and pool speaks to me like an old friend."

"Yes, so it ever is with nature; other

things and people may change and pass away, but such natural scenes as these around us, and such voices as are in the river and the woods, are always fresh and kindly to those who have known them long and well."

"Truly so; if our people were to take a new place, I don't think I should ever come to regard it as home. This water side, the banks, and scaurs, and stream, are so identified with my young days that they form, as it were, a part of home."

"I should think there was little chance of Mr. Arnold leaving this place for a new one, at his years; and there are few places in the whole of Britain, at least so far as I've seen the country, that can match the old farm-house for picturesqueness of situation—ay, and of association, too,—and with such beautiful accessories as these wooded banks and this pleasant stream."

"Then you like the country and the people, Mr. Johnson? They tell me that great changes have come over the meeting since you came here, and that you are to be settled as the minister soon."

"Yes, next week has been appointed by

the Presbytery for my ordination; I was just thinking of that special day, when I met you. It is a day to be rejoiced in by all; it should be so, rightly considered; but it is also one of trial, and ought to cause much heartsearching and examination, to the minister in particular. I do like both the people and the country very much; I may thank your mother's kindness for all that, however."

"How so, Sir? Did you not think the country beautiful till you saw Outchester?"

"Oh, yes, beautiful exceedingly! I came in the year's richest and most beautiful season to this lovely river's side, direct from the Great Babylon, the world's metropolis, a world itself of brick houses and struggling men, where for years I had sweltered, almost without one single day's breathing time; so you may be sure these scenes were like the opening of a new world, as they were of a new life, to me. But then the contrast between the fresh country and the smoky town was not more striking than the contrast between this beautiful river side and the Manse; and I felt my heart sink within me till I had

come down here, and saw your mother and sister."

"Well, the Manse is pretty much of a wreck now, I suppose, as it has been, indeed, ever since I can remember. I don't believe anything has been done to it for fifty years. But it's just like the people; old Mary and Mr. Fraser are fit occupants for the old place; it would do for nobody else."

"Just so; their lives have been so quiet and uneventful, just like a standing pool; and people, now-a-days, are so much more particular and careful that the first sight of the place is repulsive, nor does it improve on acquaintance, either. However, they have become so accustomed to what are its defects and blemishes, that they now regard them as advantages, I fancy. If Mrs. Arnold had not kindly taken me in, I believe I should have gone away very soon. But living at Outchester and living in the Manse are two very different things, in every way, I can assure you."

"No doubt of that; but the society of a farmer and his household, and the society of a man of learning and talent, like Mr. Fraser, must be just as different; is it not

so, Sir? What was a gain in one way might be a loss in another, just as with our engines—what we gain in speed we lose in power.”

“Truly, truly, as your father says; but on which side was the gain or the loss, whose society the best—the minister’s or the farmer’s, the manse or the farmhouse?—You can’t know; nobody can know, but those who have fairly tried them both. The farm, for comfort, regularity, and order, carries away the palm, as much as it does for beauty of situation, though the village of Fordham is very beautiful; and, then, for everything else, from the smallest even to the most important of all things, there is no comparison at all. Why, in many of the collier cottages on the moor I’ve found more intellectual conversation than I can do in Fordham.”

“Well, that’s strange, too; Mr. Fraser has always had the character of being an intellectual man. I remember when we youngsters used to find fault with his discourses, we were told to be quiet, that they were over high for the like of us, but were grand sermons, for all that.”

"It is quite true, however. Then, the people—I liked their frankness from the first, though a little annoyed, I must confess, with their coarseness; but then I got the entrée at Outchester, and a warm welcome before I made much acquaintance with them; and then, moreover, having learned to visit, and the people having learned to like being visited ministerially, I have grown to like them more and more from day to day. There are two ways of doing our duty, just as there is of doing the work or duty of any other trade or profession—heartily and sincerely, or in a perfunctory and spiritless way. If I have got into the manner of visiting, not as a mere necessity of the case, but heartily, I have to thank Mr. Arnold, your mother, and Marion, for it, under the Lord."

"Indeed! did they visit with you, Sir? I fear that you are far too complimentary to them all."

"Not in the least; it is all true. They did not go with me, except to the houses in Outchester itself, but then they taught me the ways of the country, made me acquainted with the names of the people, and

I got, what was far more invaluable still, encouragement, both before I set out and when I came back home again. Just think, I wanted Mr. Fraser to give me a list of the congregation for this purpose. At first he opposed it, and was very unwilling to do it; then he could not, and Willie Drouthy was referred to. Well, Willie did, after a time, give me—what do you think? Why, a list of those persons who had not paid their seat-rents for some time; some of them had not been in the church for a good few years. Just as if I was a sheriff's officer! Now, when I got the names of the places, your father gave me one or two names in each place, and I was fairly set agoing, fairly set on the road, too—it might be on the pony, if the distance was great; and thus I got on, each day liking and feeling more at home in the work, and doing that willingly and heartily which I had all along feared would be done by constraint, and that principally and chiefly because I was cheered and encouraged at home when the work was over.

John did not know what to reply to this, so he remained silent; and they walked

down the river side for a little while, before Mr. Johnson again spoke.

“ And, then, there was another means of usefulness—that is, preaching in the open-air or in barns, throughout the district. This was, at first, a positive offence at the Manse, and I could never have continued doing it, but for those at home; and yet I am assured by many, both of the old hearers and the new comers, that these sermons have done them more good than any they ever heard before.”

“ I can believe that well, Sir; and such sermons reach people that would never hear one but for them.”


“ Exactly so. Well, I owe all that to your people, to their encouragement, sympathy, and help; so I may say that to your father, mother, and sister Marion especially, is the country owing, under God, all the good that may have been done by me.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VILLAGE OF HETTON.—ST. JOHN'S DAY
FEAST.

THE village of Hetton, to which the party from Outchester was bound, is one of the cleanest, prettiest, and most aristocratic in Northumberland. It is distant about six miles up the river from the farmhouse, situated on a high sloping bank about two hundred yards from the water's edge. The river banks, from Fordham upwards, are much more accessible than lower down the stream, and hence both of the fords were in the ancient warlike time more strongly protected than those lower down, where nature interposed her own defences of precipices, and steep, easily defensible passes; thus at Hetton, as at Fordham, there were the remains of a very strong old border fortress, still kept in good repair. The village consisted of one wide street, with

a few outlying houses diverging from the cross, or rather what had been the site of the cross in the centre. Once, not so many years before, there had stood at one of the angles an old tower, which even in modern times was called the Bastile, and which had been a sort of detached outwork of the ancient castle, on its eastern flank. In place of this grim old tower, however, there now stood a trim modern cottage of Swiss fashion, with large projecting eaves, and plenty of rough woodwork about it, the residence of the steward or bailiff of the home farm. In front of the greater part of the cottages there was a long slip of land, enclosed and planted with flowering shrubs and trees, with closely mown grass and clean swept gravel paths. The houses of the village were partly ancient thatched or red-tiled cottages; partly more modern ones of larger size, glorying in heavy mullioned, diamond-paned windows and blue slated roofs. Behind each house there was a pretty large garden, which stretched up and separated the village from the public highway, which passed close by, but not through the place; indeed the vil-



lage might be said to be shut in from it, for at each entrance there were handsome gates and lodges for gatekeepers. On this road, of the village, but not in it, near the upper entrance, stood the inn and its offices, closed in on two sides by a large garden and plantation, and over all, on the height above, was the old workhouse; now that the days of Union Law have force, parcelled out to two or three families. At the foot of the wide street were the castle, the church, and the parsonage, or rather—for the people were particular—the rectory; and a goodly rectory it was, with an income of some sixteen or seventeen hundred a year, and a very small church, with a still smaller congregation attached, for the people of Northumberland are more inclined to presbytery than episcopacy.

The castle, to begin with the temporal power, was originally one of the largest, strongest, and most important on the eastern march, save those which were properly royal garrisons; and so situated that it defended one, and watched many more of the fords of the river, which river formed its own chief defence. On the

right, north of the ancient towers and curtains of the fortress, was a very deep gorge or den, now filled with tall slender trees, which in their desire to reach the sunlight, had shot upwards to an astonishing height; this side had evidently been less accessible and assailable than any of the others, though even here the huge square towers, pierced with shot-holes close to the ground, told how jealous its ancient inmates had been to guard against northern force and guile. The original outworks on the eastern and southern sides, with two of the towers, had been long ago destroyed. The courses of the old connecting battlemented walls could here and there be traced, but with the towers had been replaced by a more modern and slighter, but still very substantial wall, with battlement, gateway, and postern, and just within the modern arched gateway to the westward, was a smaller and very ancient square tower, now apparently only the abode of wild pigeons and daws. Originally this castle had consisted—like many more of the feudal strongholds within the English march—of four massive square towers, con-

nected by curtains. Of these, two had disappeared, but the remaining two were still perfect and in good repair ; and between them, and imitating their rude massiveness in a very laughable manner, had been built a modern suite of rooms, which, with an addition to the western tower, of larger and better proportioned apartments, and the accommodation the old towers afforded, formed the residence of a noble lady. It still bore the appearance of, and in many respects still was, a baronial hold, partly wearing the grim and war-worn features of the old riding times, when its lords were the starkest moss-troopers on the border, and partly of the tasteless period of last century. Between the castle and the river was a very small pleasaunce ; but if small, it was very beautiful, and, so far as vision from the towers, or the terrace was concerned, no one could tell whether the extent was great or small. The trees, and fields, and river in many of its bends and windings, the hills in front, on the left and behind, these all seemed parts and parcel of one great park, as they were of the estate of Hetton.

The church was about one hundred yards

from the castle gate; an old Gothic structure, spoiled by modern Vandals, — the original tower and belfry being almost the only part distinctly intact, and which had not been tampered with. Around the southern and eastern sides of the church lay spread out God's-acre, the churchyard, which told as conclusively as the weather-worn tower, of the great antiquity of this Church of St. John's at Hetton, and also of the vast number of generations which had passed away since it first was consecrated. Indeed there was not much to wonder at, that the body of the church was so much more modern and unsightly than the original tower and belfry. The Scots were not, in the moss-trooping times, very heedful of even holy places on the English side of the march; and churches could be burnt more easily than castles stormed, and only the massiveness and indestructibility of the porch and tower had saved them in the last memorable siege which Hetton Castle stood, so late as Elizabeth's days. The Rectory was situated between the church and castle; a staring white building; of appropriate enough design in itself, but looking in its

modern Gothic, and bran new whiteness, singularly out of place with the grim war and weather-worn towers of the old fortress and church.

Above the village stretched for weary-lonesome miles a wild, bare moor. The castle, standing on the front of the rising bank, with the village behind it, seemed one long steep step upwards from the river; from the village to the moor was another, whence it extended in its black bleakness and desolation far away southward and eastward, with here and there grim, bare rocks rising up precipitously, and heaps of pit refuse, and tall chimneys, and long lines of red-tiled colliers' huts could be discerned; and afar off the smoke of the limekilns rose in dense white clouds; for this was a country far richer in mineral wealth than in cereal. All throughout this extensive waste, there were to be seen regularly planned mounds and ditches, concerning which tradition was almost wholly silent, but which the experienced eye could tell at once were the remains of ancient camps and earthworks. Along one side of the public road, which crossed this moor and

near the village, there was a considerable plantation of Scotch firs, which, with their black funereal spines, contrasted markedly with the snow-covered ground, had a most sombre effect. It was in this plantation that the special scene of the day was about to be enacted.

The village of Hetton was full of visitors from many parts of the country around. There were young men from the large towns of Newcastle and Berwick, Kelso, Morpeth, and Alnwick, who had gone forth from this quiet place to push their fortunes, and better themselves in the world. Then there were troops of farm servants, both young men and women, come to spend, in in the midst of their families, almost the only day which during the whole year they could call their own. Even the wild son who had 'listed, if it was at all possible, was sure to be there; and on this particular day two or three red uniforms were conspicuous among the soberly-dressed people. The Hetton feast was a feast in reality. The proprietor regularly year by year contributed a substantial part to the day's enjoyment. The Christmas gift to the village

of my Lord was neither more nor less than providing each individual with the means of enjoying a good dinner. Certain oxen were fed and slaughtered for this purpose, and all, from the wealthy Rector and Factor down to the humble recipients of parish charity, were supplied with a certain quantity for each person,—be they old or young—of their families. It was a kindly and considerate way of joining in the rejoicings of his people, which put it into their power to entertain their visitors, and caused the sound of content and joy to be heard in the village. This was emphatically a day of home rejoicing; true, there were some outdoor amusements among the young men away on the snowy moor, such as shooting at marks, games of bowls played by the colliers along the frozen road; and then there was to be the rough and rather meaningless pleasantries of the Gawdy Loup; but essentially it was a time of family reunion and enjoyment.

John, his brother, and Edward Archbold arrived early. Of course the two former were well known to many of the villagers, and they underwent a running fire of salu-

tations and invitations as they walked up the village street; but they accepted none. Attracted by the shouts of the people there assembled, they went up to the Moor, where they could see, or even if they pleased, take part in the merry games. At one corner, on a large pond now fastly frozen, a party of curlers were heartily engaged in playing the roaring game, and the cries of "Swoop, swoop!" which resounded above the roar of the stones along the rough ice, led them to the place, and enabled Edward to understand the meaning of the words, when he saw the eager players sweeping away in front of the stones, to attract them to the position desired, whether that was to defend a shot already played, clear the way for one to follow, or bring it directly to the "tee"—the mark.

Farther up on the Moor, and not less noisy, though more energetically engaged, the colliers from the pits in the neighbourhood were busy at another game. Bowling, as it is called in the country side, is as different as possible from the game so designated among civilised communities; it is played with round iron bowls, of some three

or four pounds weight, along a long stretch of road, each player endeavouring, by skill and strength of arm, to send home his ball to the goal in the fewest possible strokes, and he that does so is the winner. It is strange how often there is found, even among the most ignorant and unthinking, the very best means adopted, — handed down to them it may be by tradition from a more ignorant and unthinking age still — to counteract the bad tendencies of their particular labour. In the case of these colliers, the seams of coal they were excavating were so exceedingly thin, that they were compelled in a great measure to work, to hew with their picks in most cramped and constrained positions, where only the muscles of certain parts of the frame were fully called into exercise; in consequence of which, while the muscles of the shoulders, chest, and arms were enormously developed, those of the lower extremities were quite out of proportion, small and thin, and apparently weak. See one of these men sitting, you could fancy him a Hercules; see him, on the other hand, standing, he presented a strange mixture of the powerful

and the weak, like the feet of iron mixed with clay of the beast in the prophet's vision. But this game of bowling seems the very thing needed to counteract, in some degree, their mode of work, and brought into play quite other sets of muscles besides those which were daily in special operation. Had a committee of savans, or sanitary philosophers, been required to devise some means to make these men strong of leg, as they already were of arm, they could hardly have devised anything better for the purpose, than that which they had inherited from their fathers, and were now actively engaged in.

But now the games are forsaken for a time, and the people are seen hastening in one direction, towards the plantation of sombre firs, already mentioned, from every point. In the centre of this little wood, there rises a small spring, which flows, swelling as it proceeds, till it forms a considerable brook before it joins the river. One part of this little stream, under the gloomiest and thickest cover of the fir-trees, forms a natural pool of some breadth and depth, which the boys of Hetton take care

shall each returning St. John's day, by artificial means, be deeper, muddier, and at least as broad as possible, for the special gratification and amusement of the onlookers. Around this pool, on the shelving banks of the dell of which it formed the centre, the whole of the people were now gathered to witness the performance of the absurd ceremonial which from time immemorial has taken place here. The ice, which threatened to deprive the good-natured villagers of the spectacle of drenched neighbours, has been heedfully broken, and the pool stirred up till it is very muddy, yet having many pieces of broken ice floating on its surface. Alas! for the fun of the ancient observance, there seem to have been few weddings during the past twelve months, at least there are only three unhappy wights pushed forward to dare the leap, and at least one of them, from faint heart or some other cause, seems willing to compound with the tormentors, if he may be permitted. Of this, however, there does not seem to be much probability, for the onlookers are bent on having the full amount of the fun, such as it is; nothing

less will please them, and if disappointed in having it in the legitimate and time-honoured way, are not at all unlikely to take matters into their own hands and duck any of them who may prove refractory. So, making the best of a bad bargain, the younger men prepare to try first. One of them by a vigorous bound clears the muddy ditch amid shouts of applause, which soon, however, change into roars of merriment, for the treacherous bank on which he has alighted, dangerous enough at all times, is now a complete snare from frozen snow and ice, and, instead of a steady footing, he slips and slides, and then falls backwards into the muddy pool ; and amid the floating pieces of ice, with a plunge which completely drenches him. However, he is soon drawn out, and the laughter of the bystanders is redoubled when they see the ludicrous figure he cuts as he stands dripping like a river-god and shivering, though he is still eager to see the success of his companions. The next does not seek to escape, but rushes recklessly at the leap, and lands, of course, in the puddle ; but he is wiser in his generation, and has

so far outwitted his well-wishers by alighting in a very shallow part of the pool where a tree throws out its branches, by the aid of which he is able to get on the dry ground with little damage, to the immense disgust of the well-disposed around. It is the old shoemaker's turn now. It is his third appearance on this stage, the third time he has been wed in the village, and all are on the tiptoe of expectation, and various the rough jokes which are cracked at his expense. In vain he pleads his age and infirmities; the only answer he receives is that, "if he's able enough to wed, he's able enough to loup." Moreover, the last Lord of Hetton, a peer of the realm no less, when he married, though an old man, had insisted on passing through this ordeal; therefore the old cobbler shall not escape. One needs must, when a certain person drives; so the cobbler makes up his mind; and whether from having watched and learned from those who preceded him, or because he was so well accustomed to the affair, certain it is that he did much better than any of the others, clearing with an elastic

spring—"like an awd cork," the people said,—the fated barrier, and, alighting safely and securely, he turned away, heedless of the applause which greeted his agility, to congratulate his more luckless companions on the penance being over. The others hurried off to their houses, ashamed at being beat by an old man, to change their wet clothes and escape the jibes of their neighbours; the players returned to their games, and the little party set off again for Outchester.

"What a very singular custom!" Edward said, as they walked along. "Have you any idea, John, what its meaning may be, or have been?"

"No, truly. Mayhap, it's only a rough mode of admitting the newly wed persons into the honourable rank of the married; but I don't know, I never have heard."

"There may be something in that, though," said Frank. "You know the burgesses of Alnwick have to pass through such an ordeal when they are made free of the town."

"Yes, so they have; and this place, Hetton, was once a place of more con-

sequence than it is now. Had its fairs—it has one still on St. Ringan's day—and its markets; and its cottagers have privileges of common yet, you know. I shouldn't wonder if it did refer to something of the kind."

"Well, it's a rough custom, any way," Edward said. "There's not much fun in it, either. True enough, it was comical to see that tall fellow tumble over so foolishly, and then he did look rather ludicrous dripping so ruefully on the bank; but nobody, hardly, could see much to amuse them in that, one would fancy."

"Why, we must have our minds toned down into unison with the people, to join entirely with them," said Frank. "Must look, not from our stand-point, but theirs, to see the fun."

"Yes; and then did you in any society ever see a poor fellow have a tumble, for instance, that his comrades did not laugh at him? There's a spark of malice in all of us, and it's that which makes people see fun where fun there is not, either in the thing itself or the intention."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ORDINATION.

THE remainder of the time which John and Edward had to spend at Outchester was fully occupied in making excursions far and near, during the short days, and in pleasant intercourse and sometimes serious consultations in the evenings. The visit of Marion to Grasaig was decided upon, and after long consideration it was thought advisable, in a committee of the whole household, that Frank should accept the offer which Mr. Cuthbert had made to him. These chief points settled, the young men made various visits to places in any way famous that could be easily reached. They visited Flodden Field, wandered over the scene of the battle, sat in what is called the king's seat, and tried to trace the line of march of the English army. By favour

of one of the head servants of the Castle of Ford they even penetrated into the bed-chamber which King James is said to have occupied before the battle where, the slave of fair Margaret Heron's smiles, he loitered away those precious days which, otherwise employed, might have saved to Scotland her gallant king and army. Then a day was spent at Bamborough and Lindisfarne, in the pretty village and amid the celebrated ruins of Cuthbert's Monastery, and, indeed, scarcely one of the famous ruins of the Eastern March which could be reached was left unvisited. Edward Archbold was not allowed one day to recover the dreadful fatigue of his first essay in horsemanship, and by and by he became inured to the art of riding, and very anxious to attain all the proficiency possible therein. Thus the time was occupied till the day appointed for Mr. Johnson's ordination and settlement in the meeting and congregation of Fordham had arrived.

It was a bright winter day, fair and frosty. The snow on all the roads and paths, firmly trodden down, made walking easy and dry, while the glint of the winter

sun put a cheerfulness in the hearts of the people which opener and milder weather would have failed in doing. Being at the season of the year when outdoor labour is almost entirely suspended, and the loss of a day of comparatively little importance to the farmer, and there being also the promise of a bright moon at night to light the people home—a most important consideration during the winter in such wild places—the day was universally observed as a holiday in the countryside. Churchmen and dissenters alike united in this, partly it might be from curiosity to behold the solemnity, partly it might be to take part in it; this was the case with the congregation proper, and to give a hearty welcome to the newly ordained minister. All ranks, classes, and creeds in the district were desirous of doing this, and keeping up the old name of the county for kindliness and hospitality. In consequence, there was such a gathering as is but very rarely seen even in more densely populated districts; for in addition to the fixed inhabitants, there was hardly one single family which had not some visitor from distant places; it

might be sons, daughters, or relatives, who had been drawn homeward by the special season.

Edward Archbold had never seen such a spectacle as the assembling of that multitude. He had been much struck as they walked across the country to church on the Sunday and saw from the higher grounds the little streams of people swelling and increasing as they flowed onwards towards the meeting house; and to-day it was still more remarkable and noteworthy. Afar off one or two dark figures, moving along the whitened field-paths which fell in every here and there to the more frequented roads, might be seen the dwellers in lonely huts among the hills hastening to join themselves with the residents of secluded farms, and anon with those of the more considerable hamlets and villages, until all the roads near Fordham, on either side the river, became filled as with long processions of people, young and old. Farmers and their families in their gigs and carts, on horseback and on foot, followed by their hinds, and the country tradesmen and mechanics, formed the great mass of the ap-

proaching multitudes. But there were also to be seen in the midst of the groups figures of a very different character, dark-robed, plaided men, jogging sedately along, whose white neckcloths marked their calling, and told that they were members of the Presbytery about to take a part in the solemnity of the day. It was a very rare thing, indeed, for any of these black-coated, white neckerchiefed gentry to be seen in that district; but they were generally well known by the people, as was apparent from the frequent salutations and touching of hats as they appeared. Indeed, a white neckcloth in these pastoral districts of the old Whig county is certain to meet with such marks of respect, even though the wearer be quite unknown. Of course these ministers were the more specially marked in consequence of the solemnity in which they were about to be engaged, and their names circulated from group to group, the comparative merits of each being pretty fully discussed as the people thronged into the village.

When the Outchester party arrived, the castle green, the old towers, and the village

street were filled with people waiting for the services to begin. It was a sight in itself, and very characteristic of the district, to see this multitude of people so well and so warmly clad on this cold winter's day. No one could have supposed that those people, so comfortably and warmly clothed, so really well dressed, were almost wholly hinds, earning only a few pounds a year of money wages. There was one feature of the assembly which was markedly peculiar, the universal use of the plaid, the true border plaid, worn in border fashion, for comfort and not for display; and very comfortable Edward Archbold thought they looked, far more so than if they had trusted to cloak or overcoat. Nor were the women at all behind their masculine friends in the comfort of their dress, though by no means so uniform in their outer coverings. The grey plaid was replaced by warm shawls and cloaks of gay colours; and though town-bred people might have smiled at the fashion of gown or bonnet and, the coarseness of the heavy country-made boots, they must at the same time have acknowledged their suitability to the place and season.

But now the officiating minister, in gown and bands, makes his appearance from the door of the Manse and enters the church. Immediately the groups break up and follow; and very speedily the building is filled from floor to ceiling. In front of the old-fashioned pulpit a platform for the special services of the day has been erected, on which the members of the Presbytery and the young priest are seated in full sight of the people, till the sermon and opening services are over, and the special act of the day's solemnity is about to be performed. There is an air of solemn earnestness upon the countenances of all within the church. True, many have been attracted by the novelty of the spectacle—the great majority of this assemblage have never seen an ordination in their lives, and only a very few months ago such an occasion would have been greeted and welcomed more from motives of curiosity than any higher feeling. Now all is greatly changed: the stirring preaching of the last few months, the earnestness and fervency of Mr. Johnson's ministrations, the diligence with which from farm to farm, from

hamlet to hamlet, he has visited amongst and roused the people, have had a telling effect upon them, and they have come far better prepared to take part in such a solemn ordinance as this than could have been anticipated a year ago. The people prove that they are in earnest, and show it clearly in the fervour with which they sing the opening psalms and the deep attention they pay to the preparatory sermon.

The young priest sitting there in the full sight of them all, the observed of all, what may he be thinking of? Is his mind so engaged following the thoughts of the preacher as to shut out all other ideas? He has heard read out as the text the most appropriate words of the Saviour's invitation and command, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," and has been startled by their fitness for the season; but though the preacher is handling his subject earnestly, affectionately, and well, the attention of the young priest wanders much more than is usual with him. He feels as in a whirl, as if in a dream. He tries to realise where he is, and what he is doing;

the fervent supplications of the moderator ascend to the Father's throne, and the hands of all the brethren are on his head; and fervent and sincere is the unspoken Amen in many hearts to the various petitions of the prayer. Now follow addresses to the new pastor and the people on their relative duties. Charges to each as to their duty, and how they ought to perform it—listened to, it is true, with attention still. But now the auditors are not so rapt and engrossed as they were a little while ago; the cold is beginning to be painfully felt, and the people grow somewhat restless, as the last admonitions—those to themselves specially—are somewhat stringently laid upon them, and somewhat prolixly drawn out. All are rejoiced when the whole services are ended: and Mr. Johnson, now the minister of this church and people, hies away to the door, accompanied by the best-known member of Presbytery, to receive the welcome of the people as they pass out of the place. It is an interesting and affecting scene. The sun glints down on the shattered ruins of the ancient stronghold, and gilds the flag-

staff on the top with its cold wintry beams, throwing the shadows far over field and village, while brightening up the snow-clad spot where the young priest stands. The people pass out, and form in groups around, each one eager to shake hands, and bid the young man welcome and God speed; and there he stands with a smile on his face—and as it seems to Mrs. Arnold, whose own eyes are full to overflowing, and have run over many times during the day's services—with a tear in his eyes, unable to do more than shake hands with each one that comes forward, to speak to them all being out of the question. The Outchester party wait till the crowd has passed away, and Mr. Johnson is able to respond to the hearty, truthful God speed which they give him.

Now that all the special religious services of the day are over, the roads from Fordham are clad with companies of the people homeward bound, congratulating each other on the work that has been done, or criticising the various ministers who have taken part in the duties, not very ceremoniously treating them, it must be confessed. The

village still continues full and stirring however; there is to be a welcoming dinner to the new minister, and to the presbytery, now that this auspicious event has been brought about. This accounts for the fact that it is mostly women-kind that are to be seen on these homeward paths. It would be a stigma, those Northumbrians feel, on the character of the church of Fordham, were not this dinner a triumphant one; and then there is great curiosity to dine with the priests,—so many of them, to be sure, never were in Fordham before,—to hear the speeches that may be spoken, and to see the young minister get the fine new pulpit gown they have subscribed for. Then to maintain the character of the Water-side for hospitality, makes farmers and hinds, tradesmen, shepherds, and even the colliers, desirous to be present. So the large room of the inn is filled to overflowing, when the members of Presbytery come up the street from the Manse, in a kind of procession, headed by old Mr. Fraser himself. On the whole, the company is a sober, quiet one, though composed of such heterogeneous materials, and as

many of the ministers have far to ride, the festivity is not long protracted. Doubtless there will be stories of some who, if they didn't sing, at least acted in the spirit of the song, and did not go home till morning. But the vast majority, and among them the party from Outchester, now increased by two of the stranger ministers, were safely housed at the farm at a very early hour.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UP ON HETTON WASTE.

UP on the moors inland, where the bare rocks burst through the thin soil, and only heather and scant herbage could be found,—save along the burns and watercourses in the best seasons,—lay, in an irregular, straggling line, the mining village of Hetton Waste. This tract of country, so bleak and bare on the surface, was rich in mineral wealth. Coal and lime, and various metallic ores, were dug out of the earth's bowels, and a very considerable population were employed as colliers and lime-burners.

They were, as a whole, ruder and wilder than their agricultural and pastoral neighbours, the hinds and shepherds of the district, though there was not the same strict line of demarcation between them that is often found in other places. Such of these

miners as had followed the migratory instinct of their race, had not by any means improved on their original upbringing, nor did they elevate their neighbours when they returned home. At their return, they brought back with them more fierce and lawless habits, and became the dread and terror of their families and acquaintances, rather than their joy and pride, as was the case with the cadets of the agricultural families. This festive season had witnessed the return of many of those miners from collieries and mines in Yorkshire and Durham — lads who had not maintained, during their year or two of absence, the sobriety of spirit, temper, and conduct which, on the whole, distinguished the people of the countryside. As a matter of course, their participation in the festivities at Hetton Feast had been of a ruder, more noisy, and much more profane character, and with the exception of one or two of the regular established village toppers, who were perhaps better known in the inn kitchen than their own houses, had been much longer protracted than that of any one else. Indeed, as is so frequently the case—though hap-

pily rare in the countryside—the misery, the horror of the morning which infallibly follows a prolonged debauch, led them to a repetition; and so they went on, morning after morning, day after day, no night sober, till, their money being all spent, they were suddenly, as seamen say, pulled up by the head with a round turn, and with bodies enfeebled, strength prostrated, stomachs disorganised, and nerves relaxed and shattered, they were compelled to trust themselves to nature for a cure, and for days to endure the misery of aching heads, craving appetites, and trembling, nerveless limbs.

Many had already recovered, and betaken themselves to work again. Some of those who had hitherto been foolish, and had suffered themselves to be led astray by the tempters, not being of themselves habitually dissipated, dared, in the reaction and disgust at their conduct, consequent upon so many days foully wasted, to brave the jeers and jibes of their more hardened comrades, and attend the solemn services of the ordination. It had made a great impression on many of them, and had been hailed by the

leaders of the community, as a token for the good that might eventually be done among them as a class, under such a minister as Mr. Johnson.

The holidays over, the mines on the Waste had begun work with new vigour, absorbing all those men who for years had been away, who chose to apply for work. On the morning after the solemnity, they were all in full operation again, and men prophesied a season of prosperity such as had never been seen before in the district, from discoveries lately made, and mines lately opened. Such was to be the case in the future to the miners as a community, but not all of their number who started work that morning were to live to see it. Casualties in mines are so common, that people hardly take the trouble to read the accounts of them, unless they are more appalling than usual. People who shudder at, and lament and mourn over, the loss sustained in a battle, who grieve over a disaster wherein some men have fallen, it may be ten thousand miles away, and for weeks and months eagerly, greedily look for the particulars of the fate of the fleet or army so stricken,

will hardly do more than glance at the results of a catastrophe more terrible, more overwhelming, which takes place at their own very doors. One hundred, two hundred Britons may be suffocated, or blown to pieces, following their hazardous occupation, without which the prosperity of the country would collapse, and for them hardly a moan will be made, out of the immediate circle from which they have been so suddenly hurried, while the whole nation seems to put on sackcloth and ashes, and to sit mourning and lamenting for those slain by the sword in some war or battle, where the real benefit to the country to be thereby acquired, or even the benefit to the human race, may be exceedingly problematical. 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view in verity. Over the mining people of Hetton Waste there was no such general calamity hovering, but one family among them was to suffer under one of the casualties to which their peculiar kind of labour is specially exposed.

So it happened that the morning after Mr. Johnson's ordination, and while the family at Outchester and their guests were

sitting at breakfast, news came of an accident having happened at the Waste. The buxom handmaid entered, trying her best to look sad and miserable, by no means an easy task for her to do. When interrogated she could only answer—

“Nick’s just come back frae the hill, an’ there’s been a great misfortun, an awfu’ accident, an’ Jerry Cowan’s son’s been carried hame terrible smashed.”

“Eh me, d’ye hear that?” Mrs. Arnold cried. “The puir lad! which o’ them is’t, Jenny, did ye hear?”

“Nick didna say, but the folk said he couldna live, and a man an’ horse had been sent ower to Framlington for the doctor.”

“Who is the man, ma’am?” Mr. Johnson asked. “Is he one of our people? I don’t remember the name.”

“The faither while comes to the meeting,” Mr. Arnold answered, “but they’re a wild, ill-doing family, and belong to nae church, I reckon. Some o’ the sons ha’e been south, and the character of them a’, the young folk I mean, is no a bit better than it should be.”

"The more need then that they should be seen after," said Mr. Johnson; "I'll go up to the Waste directly. Perhaps my going may not do much good, but I can at least try."

"You may do good to the others, brother," said one of the ministers. "It is always well to keep that in mind, if you cannot lead the sufferer to the Saviour himself, his sufferings, and your teachings, may tell with good effect upon his friends; aye hope the best in all cases though, that's my way."

"Yes," the other minister said; "death-beds or sick-beds are places and seasons where much good may be done, even though a death-bed belief and repentance must always be far from satisfactory, from the very circumstance that it is such."

"It is a strangely melancholy beginning of your work," John said to the young minister; "yesterday all so bright and fair, and rejoicing, and to-day called as the very first duty of your ministry to a death-bed; and such a death-bed! It must needs be a great trial to you."

"Yes, it is, there is little doubt of that,

but we must expect many as sudden changes. I have seen many such—never accidents such as this has probably been—but joy, or at least mirth at night—mark there is a great difference often between the two—and sorrow following close on its heels in the morning. All my experience shows me that life is a very chequered scene.”

“Truly, and this is a case in point; but would it be right to go with you, Sir; might I ask permission if it would? I should like much to go; I rather think too I know the lad of old.”

“Oh, quite proper, indeed I’ll be very glad if you’ll come. But you were speaking of such varied circumstances occurring in our labours; just remember also, John, that as often we are cheered in God’s good grace, and sorrow abideth for the night, but joy cometh in the morning, and in our experience this saying is very often fulfilled.”

They left the breakfast-table, as he spoke, to make ready for the long walk over the hills and moors to the mining district of Hetton Waste both Edward Archbold and

Frank were to accompany them. The two ministers also set out on their journey homewards, for their long travel through the thinly peopled country, which would keep them in the saddle the best part of the day, before they could reach the secluded Church and Manse hidden in the lone valleys, among the hills of the Middle March, which were the happy, peaceful homes of these worthy men.

Mr. Johnson and the young men set out for the Waste; it was a long walk across the moors, and through wilder scenery than Edward Archbold had yet seen. The slight snow, joined with the long continued frost, had made it possible to go almost in a straight line over hill and moss. After leaving the inclosed and cultivated lands which bordered the banks of the river, and having passed through the black funereal wood of firs which separated the agricultural from the moorland country, they entered upon the Waste itself. It was an immense tract, at first seemingly a boundless dead level, as it lay under its white covering. But as they advanced, they began to discern afar off on the horizon

the fringe of sombre wood jutting here and there far into the Waste, showing where improvement had made inroads, and reclaimed, at least in part, the bog or moss. Ever and anon also, they passed huge heaps of mineral waste, the débris from mine or coal-pit, or came upon wide yawning gulfs, around which the white dense smoke, ascending in the frosty air, pointed out the position of the kilns in which the lime thence excavated was burned. Farther on still, nearer the centre, as yet untouched by collier or miner, they walked over and gazed with curious eyes upon the lines and ditches and earthworks of various ancient camps, round and square, so old, that of them even tradition was silent. Mr. Johnson, grave and somewhat pre-occupied as he was, could not help pointing out to them one of these, more perfect and more clearly defined than the others which they passed, as the remains of Surrey's camp, just before the eventful day of Flodden, whence he made that famous flank march to Twissel Bridge, which brought about a battle as momentous to both kingdoms as the still more famous march on Balaklava

has been in our times. To Edward Archbold this long walk was one of great fatigue, yet greater wonder. The Waste was such a picture of desolation. There was hardly a vestige of life to be seen, and almost the only traces of man were those rubbish heaps and mouldering earthworks. Standing on the highest point they reached, and looking down on the valley of the Hetton Water, with those stern remnants of ancient wars behind and around him, and the still more frowning line of ruined fortresses and fortalices at every ford and defensible place in front, he could not help wondering what it was those ancient warriors had gathered to fight for, what those strong towers were built to defend. To judge from the appearance of the country even now, its poverty must have been intense long ago, and though it was the frontier land, and consequently greatly exposed, yet it seemed to have needed defence out of all proportion to its riches. Either it must have been by far richer than we imagine, or the Scots must have been so poor that even the poverty of these Northumbrian borderers seemed riches to them.

After a brisk pleasant walk across the Waste, John being the guide, they came to the mining village itself. The village of Hetton Waste differed from the vast majority of such villages quite as much from its irregularity as its situation. High up on the moor, quite beyond the bounds and the possibility of cultivation as it seemed, lay the village, in scattered groups of houses, between two long, slightly elevated, parallel ridges. Between these, for the distance of a mile or more, were various heaps of rubbish, and pits, some of them old works long ago abandoned, and the mounds of waste material overrun with heather, and having here and there stunted fir-trees scattered over their surface, only revealing their character by the irregularity and angularity of their shape, so different from the graceful sweep of the natural water-worn elevations around. Among and beside these, throughout the whole length, lay the village, beginning with the old houses of the sinkers of the first pit ages ago, when feudal barons ruled in Hetton and Fordham, and moss-troopers rode on foray into the districts, which these

pits now considered their best customers, and ending with those lately built to accommodate the last comers. Every here and there these houses stood in twos and threes, sometimes out on the Waste, more frequently under the shelter of the mounds. It did not seem as if any advance had been made in any way to improve upon these earliest dwellings. The modern cottages—if they deserved the name—looked to the full as rude as the ancient, and all were rough and poor enough. There were some faint attempts at gardens—it was a great country for flowers, and famous for its flower shows—at most of these cottages; but the original soil itself was naught, and the débris of the pits, whatever it might become in time, did not seem at all like kindly soil for any sort of crop. Still by these attempts the character of the inhabitants could be not unfairly guessed, and even the least attempt at neatness and order—trim fences, or having the walk to the door edged with turf or slim lengths of the thin sandy shale, which could be got in abundance from the rubbish heaps, told their own story of habits of order, decency, and

sobriety ; while the neglected plot, the heap of ashes before the door, the railing broken, the gate hanging by one hinge, or perhaps having none at all, as surely told of disorder and dissipation, of glorious drinking bouts at pay-times, and the many St. Mondays which the tenants observed.

At the farther end, the last house of the straggling village looking out on the Waste, and standing alone, was the place to which they were going. One could tell at a glance that its inhabitants were not of the best members of the community. Though the newest, the latest built of all, it was already much dilapidated, and far more badly kept than any house they had yet seen. The glass of the windows was broken, and instead there were pieces of board nailed on, bundles of straw or rags, and in one case an old hat thrust through, in place of panes. There was no garden, not even an attempt at anything of the sort was to be seen, but the ground around the house lay in the rough heaps, covered with fragments of stone, in which it had been left by the masons long ago, save only that the dunghill rose high before, and almost concealed one of the

windows. The character of Jerry Cowan was but indifferent. He was handless and thriftless, and his house told it as plainly as it could be told. Was the character of the man the consequence of the state of his hut? or the state of the house the effect of the feeble character of the man? Which was the cause? which the effect?

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HURT MINER.

"THIS is the house," John said, as they came quite abruptly round one of those great unsightly mounds of pit débris; "it is here that Jerry Cowan lives, Mr. Johnson."

"Not a very inviting place," Edward said. "How is it possible people can live in such a house as that, I wonder,—at any rate, with anything like comfort or content?"

"It is bad enough in appearance, certainly," Mr. Johnson answered, with a faint smile; "but that house is vastly better, in many respects, than ninety-nine out of every hundred in the district; you can see that there are at least two rooms in it."

"At least two rooms!" Edward unconsciously repeated, in his amazement. "Do

those well-dressed people I saw yesterday, whom you called hinds, live in such discomfort as this would seem to tell of?"

"Very few of them have even such accommodation as there is here," the minister answered. "John will tell you better than I can, how it is with the hinds. I was quite as much surprised, at first, as you can be, Mr. Archbold; but I've become quite used to the customs and habits of the country now — quite used to see well-dressed, well-conducted people, thoroughly church-going people, too, come out of houses townspeople would consider hardly fit for cattle, let alone such decent folk."

"Truly, Ned," John said, "it is likely enough you'd be astonished, if you saw many of the houses, and the folk who live in them; but we're used to it all, you know, and take such things as a mere matter of course, which, doubtless, astonished such as Mr. Johnson and you, town-bred both. But here we are—"

"Will it be right for us to go in with you, Mr. Johnson?" Frank asked.

"Oh, quite so; at first, any way. Indeed, the people would take it amiss, be

affronted, if you did not. You can easily leave, if I see that there is a necessity for doing so."

They approached the door as he spoke. There was no need to knock for admission; cold as the day was, and though there was one within suffering so grievously, the door stood wide open. But to compensate—at least, a stranger, ignorant of collier nature might have thought so, though it was only the habitual custom of the race—there was a fire blazing and crackling on the hearth large enough to suffice for a steam furnace, and making the place fearfully hot. The apartment was square, of considerable size, with earthen floor, and having a dingy bedstead, covered with still dingier bedding, in one corner, while, scattered throughout the place, were a couple of tables, a few rough chairs and stools, and the pots and pans and culinary vessels of earthenware of the household. The place seemed rather dingy than really dirty. On the walls hung two or three suits of pit clothes stained and soiled with clay and oil. The injured man was lying on the bed. Their attention was drawn to him instantly by

the impatient groans and exclamations which proceeded from the corner, even before their eyes, getting accustomed to the light, could penetrate so far. There were several people in the room — neighbours, come to hear what the doctor had said, and the various members of the disorderly household; and Edward noticed, as he stood looking through the open door along with Frank, many more people appearing in the distance, and hastening to the house.

“‘Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together,’” Frank whispered to Edward.

“What do you mean?” Edward asked. “I don’t see the force of your quotation anyway at all.”

“No, I dare say not. But wheresoever the minister is, in this good county of Northumberland, there will the people assemble. We’ll have the house full before many minutes are over.”

Mr. Johnson advanced to the bedside, while John spoke to the father and mother about the hurt lad. There was no attempt at privacy, no seeking to seclude the poor youth from the eyes of all, while the minis-



ter was with him,—no desire, even, that the dying lad should be left alone with the priest, neither did he himself seem to wish it. The people, indeed, pressed forward around the bed, to hear what the minister might say to him, or he to the minister ; and this, not from want of feeling, but from the total absence of anything like delicacy. These were kindly, well-intentioned people, and, in this case, most sympathetic ; but they were used to do everything publicly ; even the acts most secret with others had hardly a veil thrown over them with these Waste miners ; so they pressed curiously forward.

The father and mother were still, as it seemed, stunned and stupefied with the greatness and suddenness of the calamity when the minister spoke to them, ere passing on to the young man, leaving John to hear the sad story—a very sad one. These elder people were shiftless, and had been content to live on in the midst of dirt and discomfort, and had early lost all control over their children, rather than been decidedly wicked. It was from the conduct of the sons that the evil repute of the

family had arisen. This lad had been enticed away by his elder brothers while yet a mere boy,—he was only twenty years old now—to one of the great collieries on the banks of the Tees, and had never before been permitted to work as a man till that very morning. Hitherto, he had been reckoned a boy. This morning, very early, he had gone out full of a spirit and determination which his mother said had put a new hope into her heart, that he would turn out a better man than those of her children who had preceded him. He had—to put it in their own words—struck stroke for the first time, and, alas! as it appeared, for the last also. Ere he had been in the pit an hour, and while working in a place which the oversman had inspected and pronounced safe—whether it happened from his want of skill, or was an unavoidable casualty, which could not have been foreseen or guarded against, they could not tell—but thus it happened:—While removing the coal which he had loosened, a great mass of the superincumbent rock, the roof of the pit, had fallen, and struck him on the back, as he bent forward, and crushed him, face down-

ward, amid the fragments on the floor. There were plenty of men at hand, and before many minutes had passed he was freed, and brought to the surface, but hurt beyond "remeid." His mother said, with a strange pathetic calmness, that she knew that from the first, and now the doctor had confirmed her fears. The lower part of the spinal column was crushed, and the lower extremities paralyzed and already dead, while all the higher and so-called vital regions were untouched. There was a strange pathos in the simple story, as they told it, that filled the eyes of the young men with tears. It was more like listening to some incident told by one of the Hebrew writers in the Scripture than anything at all like the way our modern writers narrate such events.

All this time Mr. Johnson had been speaking to the young man earnestly and sympathetically, and at last, fearful of wearing out the sufferer, who smothered his groans for the moment as he best could, the minister engaged in prayer. The house was now filled with the comrades of the wounded lad and the people from the nearest houses, and presented an appear-

ance which, once seen, was not likely soon to be forgotten, nor was the effect lessened when the voice in prayer was heard. Mr. Johnson's great popularity and success were caused, under God, by his earnestness; and if he ever before was earnest, he was much more so now. All who stood around, listening to and silently joining in his fervent supplications, were startled and annoyed at first; that feeling changed to amazement, and then passed into awe, as they heard another voice, which they did not recognize at first, repeating every word the minister used in his prayer. Mr. Johnson himself was unable, for a moment, to make out what this most unusual thing could mean, whose voice it was which followed his so closely; but when he did recognize the accents, a feeling arose within him, the like of which he had never felt before, and he began to speak more slowly, and, insensibly, more simply and more fervently, so that the stricken lad might be the better able to understand and follow him. This was so unusual, so unexpected, altogether unheard of, indeed, among the Presbyterians, that there need be little wonder at

the great effect the sound of that second voice had upon the people. Truly, there was an intense desire, a pathetic yearning, in the voice repeating the young minister's words—now in the high bold tones of young manhood, now in broken, agonized accents, as if fearful pain of body was contending with the mind striving to fix itself on God and his grace, like a blending of groaning anguish and overpowering earnestness, that was unspeakably affecting and startling; and one by one the neighbours standing around felt their eyes fill, and a solemn awe fall upon them; and then from every side might be heard, mingling with the tremulous voice of the minister and the agonized response of the suffering man, the long-drawn, half-stifled sob, changing in many cases into an open burst of weeping. Everyone was deeply affected, and the child-like manner in which the suffering youth followed, word by word, petition by petition, the minister to the end of his prayer, produced on them all, at its conclusion, an outburst of tears such as comes to bearded men but seldom in a lifetime. Minister and people, the household

and strangers, were all irresistibly affected, and the voice of supplication well nigh drowned in sorrow: all but the father and mother—no tear came to their eyes. Were they past crying? or were they of such stolid and sordid natures that they did not feel, and could not weep? Ah! judge not, brother, or judge charitably; that poor mother's heart is well nigh broken, and a dull feeling of pain, an almost paralysis of the mind, had deprived both herself and the father of anything like a due apprehension of the scene, or a proper realisation of how near the end was drawing nigh.

When the prayer was ended, Mr. Johnson sat down again by the bedside, after having motioned to the people to leave the place for a time. He was as yet unable to speak, and was glad to hide his face for a little; then he waited till the groans of the lad—which had burst forth anew at the conclusion of the prayer, as if they had been pent up, restrained by great mental exertion during its continuance—had subsided in a measure, when he began to speak kindly and hopefully to him again. John and the others had gone out as soon

as they could get, not sorry to have an instant's space to recover themselves, and they walked in silence towards the nearest pit, in company with some of the miners, who, next to the minister himself, delighted in being with the minister's friends. It was long before any of them could converse steadily again. Albeit little used to deep emotion, these colliers have to-day had their minds stirred to their depths, and have felt in some degree how unspeakably precious the soul is, and what the dread and agony must be which one would feel to see God coming to judge them, and yet to be so all unprepared to meet Him at His coming.


When they could speak again, though the scene they had just left was still uppermost in their minds, they attempted to speak on indifferent subjects, and led the young men away to see the superlative new engine which was being erected, the first as yet in that very ancient mining region. These engineers were not likely to attach the same importance to this engine, nor to think it such a wonderful piece of mechanism as these more simple

people did. Already, even in its imperfect state, it was the wonder of the countryside, and the people turned out in noisy admiration to see the carts laden with its several parts, as they passed through the villages towards the pit. It does not, in truth, take much to make these country people wonder, but this engine was something quite above and beyond them, and so mysterious too, it divided with the young priest the thoughts of very many in the district. John went to the place where it was being erected. All these young men, well acquainted as they were with engines, were so far ignorant of machines of this sort, and therefore they looked upon it with some little curiosity. Some half dozen of their own tribe were busy fitting the various parts together, and John was very soon in conversation with them. They were from Edinburgh. Famous as were the machine works within this county of Northumberland, the Scots had got this work to do; and as the young men soon proved their craft by the questions they asked, and by the way they examined the work, the stranger men

speedily discovered that they came from Grasaig, and spoke to them of the strike then proceeding. It was quickly found out, too, that these men were in favour of and supported that ill-judged movement, and that there were even some of the rashest and most headstrong lads from their own shop working here. Strange, that in this wild, lonely, secluded spot, among the wastes of Northumberland, they should find men who only a week or two before had been their shopmates, ere they had shut themselves out of shop and good work at home, and were now here, content, for actually less wages, to banish themselves from home comforts, to put up with the miserable inconveniences of lodging in the shed erected as a barrack for the various sets of workmen employed about this building, or to have to hunt out for themselves almost as uncomfortable lodgings in the collier houses.

It was with a shout that the two Grasaig men recognised John and Edward. At first they seemed to think the young men had followed their own example and come out on strike too, and therefore were in-


clined to receive them most graciously; but when they understood that such was not the case, they broke out into vehement reproaches and threatenings, in which they were joined by most of their companions. Had John and his friend been strangers there and alone, it is very probable these men would have proceeded to some violent extremity of ill usage, but the colliers were present, and they knew and supported John as a native of the district, a countryman and friend. So prudence made the machinists hold their hands, but not their tongues, which they continued to use foully and vilely, as is the manner of the low and violent of every class. Edward Archbold noticed, and pointed out to John, one of these men, an ordinary-looking fellow enough, who was speaking fiercely, and gesticulating with great violence; as he did so, he displayed a hand very remarkably marked, bereft of two fingers by accident or nature, it could not be told which, but most likely natural, for there was a singular excrescence on the back and lower edge, which now shone out very livid and very ugly. John, without know-



ing wherefore, took special notice of this hand, and the man that owned it, and days after, the growth, or wen, or whatever it was, afforded means of identification. Mr. Johnson's arrival put the engineers to silence—wild as they were, even they had some respect for the cloth, and knew full well the errand on which he had come, and in which he had been employed—and the party set out again for Outchester in peace, escorted to the very edge of the Waste almost, by the minister's own body-guard of some score of miners.

Little was said on the way. Mr. Johnson and John were alike occupied by the scenes they had just witnessed. The young minister was very grave, graver even than usual; the agony of that soul was ever present to his mind; the terrible earnestness of the poor hurt lad, with, at the same time, the knowledge of the almost heathen ignorance in which he now was, as he had been all his life. There was blindness of mind, the total ignorance of the Scripture and of the Saviour, which he had discovered, to discourage him, and the intense anxiety and desire to encourage; and he deter-

mined that, while this poor waif lived, what man could do in the way of leading him to the Lord who was crucified, he should do. And John was thinking over that scene, and on Mr. Johnson, as the foremost figure there ; on his ministrations to the poor lad himself, and to the parents, so delicate, yet so faithful—so sympathetic, yet so uncompromising ; and on the prayer which he had offered in such peculiarly trying circumstances. John could not help feeling something almost like regret that the way for this devoted minister was not in all points clear ; and that, but for that tacit pre-engagement with Harry Grey, Marion would, he had little doubt, have turned a far more favourable eye upon, and lent a not unwilling ear unto the young minister.



CHAPTER XX.

THE RETURN TO GRASAIG.

JOHN ARNOLD had not been pleasuring, nor enjoying himself all this time he had been at home. He despatched Frank and Edward on excursions to all the places of note in the county, while often he himself remained at Outchester shut up in the workshop, which served for both the blacksmith and joiner, when there was work to do at the farm. As it is needless to say, there was work for the former more or less almost every day. Here John wrought away at some ideas his teeming brain had conceived, and, good draughtsman as he was, he did not rest contented with drawings, but actually made models of the various improvements he fancied he had discovered. Edward Archbold was too high-spirited, too full of the novelties around him, to notice,

or pay much heed to John's frequent pre-occupation, unless it were by a passing jest. Indeed, even Mr. Johnson had never run such a risk of being spoiled as Edward did by Mrs. Arnold; his frank, sunny character, his delight, so openly expressed, with all he saw and participated in, his evident great esteem and respect for John, and the rapidity with which he became one of the family, had made a complete conquest of the old lady's heart. And if Mr. Johnson was fathoms deep in love with Marion, Edward was already miles, and this was not in the least diminished by the constant association with her — for she accompanied Frank and himself to almost every place to which they went — nor by the hint obscurely conveyed by John, that already she was engaged. What of that, he said to himself, so was I once, or thought myself at least, or Annie said so, perhaps it may only be the same with her. This dim, distant lover, who is he, that he should put a bar to my hopes, and shut up this sweet girl to years of waiting his convenient season? He was by no means so sure about Mr. Johnson; there seemed a greater, be-

cause a more present danger here, from the lover present, even though he was only sighing as yet, and gazing in doubt and perplexity whether he should succeed or not, though he was not accepted, than in one thousands of miles away, though he was favoured. There were many chances against the latter, in favour of the former, Edward thought. And the young minister had some such feeling with respect to this bright, bold young stranger. Neither the one nor the other could properly appreciate the true heart of Marion Arnold.

The days were fully occupied in these pleasant excursions, and the nights in the still pleasanter intercourse of the household around the fire. Famous castles, or at least such as were once famous in border story and song, were visited, and Edward was often not a little ashamed of himself at feeling fatigue in these long walks, while Marion, delicate as she seemed, showed none; but he ought to have taken into account his town training, and in addition the really trying work he had gone through making the acquaintance of the Outchester ponies, and learning the noble art of horsemanship.



Edward had seen with his own eyes the peasant households of Outchester, and been initiated into the secrets of the comfort that was to be found, as well as the real, true happiness which existed, in these humble abodes, even where the one apartment seemed kitchen, parlour, hall, and bedchamber, and where sometimes the fragrant breath of the cow, or the lowing that told of milking time having come, plainly said that she was just behind the hallan. It was quite true that he could not get rid of the idea that such a state of things as this should not be allowed to exist, that these worthy hired servants deserved to be as well housed and have as much room individually to expatiate in, as the cattle of the landlord. A larger house, all of these people granted would be a great boon; but both the masters and the hinds had grown up under, and accustomed to, this order of things, and they did not seem to care much for a change. Of the comfortable decency of the people—amazing as the statement may seem—there could be no doubt; if they had not much room nor much money, they had plenty of money's worth. Plenty to

eat, such as it was, good clothing, not too heavy work, with yearly engagements, and then they were generally a church-going people; and though it is true they might take years to get through the little stock of old-fashioned books, which were in many cases heirlooms, they were not illiterate. He had seen their amusements too, as witness the guisards and the feast, and that they not only seemed, but really were contented and happy.

They had heard once or twice from Gra-saig; Annie Archbold had written to Edward and told him that Mr. Morton had sent them word that the men seemed quieter, though there was little change as yet in their attitude, only that many of the more fiery and unruly spirits had left the town, and gone away, seeking work it was supposed, to England. It was known that the men on strike were already beginning to feel the true difficulties of their position, and to suffer under the hardships they had brought upon themselves; but no one as yet had offered to come back. And finally her mother and herself were longing for their return, and somebody else besides




them, and hoping that John's sister would accompany them.

After long debating and much hesitation, Marion was permitted to make preparations for a short stay with her brother in the strange town. Marion Arnold was very young, and had never been from home save in company with her mother; all her days had been spent under that mother's eye, and as the time drew near it was not without much pain and sinking of the heart that she thought of going away. But all the past months rose up before her to urge her to go, and, besides, the innocent young heart had no little desire to go out into the world for a time, to see the strange town, the strange country, and the strange things which there must needs be there. She had a great curiosity also about this mysterious Annie Archbold, of whom she could hardly get John to speak a word, and about whom, moreover, many strange thoughts would arise in her mind. Mrs. Arnold was in an excitable nervous state about her daughter, not positively unwilling that she should go now, but yet fearful about her going, feeling by an-

icipation all the pangs of the separation, and ever picturing to herself the desolation of the house when her bright bird Marion was gone. The old man too was very fidgety, and in every way unlike himself, and could not bear, during these few last days, that she should be out of his sight for any length of time. The whole household, the whole farm-town in fact, was restless and uneasy, and it seemed rather as if Marion was going away for good than only on a visit of a few weeks' duration.


The Monday morning came, and very early, long before daybreak, the travellers left Outchester. The parting—as how could it be otherwise between such a mother and daughter?—was very painful. To the mother especially, who was left alone, for the first time bereft of all her children, not for a day merely, but for a length of time, it was very trying and hard to bear; and so she withdrew to her own room after the travellers had gone, and when she re-appeared she set about putting her maids to rights, and the household affairs in order, in a style she had not used for many a day, and which made the



buxom Betty look about her in not a little amazement and consternation. There was a second parting, when the party reached the village of Framlington, with the father, and poor Marion, her tears from the first leave-taking hardly dried, was again, when receiving her father's solemn and fervent blessing, made to feel the bitterness of separation from those we love dearly. Once in the coach, however, with Frank as her companion—the other two were mounted on the roof—her spirits rose rapidly again as they proceeded onward, and before they reached Berwick, Marion was able to look about her, and began to take an interest in the places that they passed, and to look with wonder on the part which yet remains of that bleak moor where Grizzel Baillie robbed the mail of the warrant for her father's execution, and so saved his life,—the moor of Unthank,—still extensive enough to tell what all that border land was some two centuries ago.

At Edinburgh our travellers were not long delayed; they arrived in time to get one of the mid-day coaches to the Capital of the West, and they preferred to undergo the

extra fatigue, to get the journey over at once. They reached Glasgow at nightfall, Marion not having seen anything in Edinburgh, but the picturesque view of the old town and the castle, and the long vista of Princes Street and Waterloo Place. The railway from Glasgow to Grasaig had only been lately opened, but there was a train down that night. Railway travelling was more or less unusual to them all, but Marion Arnold had not even seen, much less travelled by one. Here then was a novelty, a something with which to fill her first letter home. In her own district railways were as yet looked upon with something like pious horror, and there was not much surprise either felt or expressed at the various calamities which took place upon them, and certainly the record of railway accidents was looked on as the record of so many providential judgments on those injured, for their mad presumption in travelling in such a way. Of course there were various lines in the process of construction throughout the county, very soon to supersede all other modes of conveyance; but these simple people at home would not believe that there could



be people in canny Northumberland rash enough to travel by them. This then was the first and chiefest wonder to Marion. Of Glasgow she saw little and realised nothing, as she was at once hurried off to the station, and almost before she knew what they were about, found herself seated in a comfortable carriage, where she could recover herself—to think was almost beyond her power.

It was the evening of a holiday of some sort or another, and all the towns around had poured their hordes during the day into Glasgow, to be poured out again at night as they best could. The crush and pressure to get the train homeward-bound was therefore dreadful. If in these better regulated times, when travelling has become a science, we avoid those festive crowds and excursion trains—prudent people I mean—because of some little annoyance or discomfort we have or may suffer, we can imagine how much more they should have been avoided then, how much greater those annoyances must have been, when travellers, porters, guards, and drivers, all were new to their duties, and lacked the

education they have received since then. The rush to get seats after the little party were seated was dreadful, and those who were placed near the carriage door were kept for a time in continual hot water. It was only the determined attitude of the four stout fellows who defended the post, which prevented them from being smothered.

A youngish person, she might be a lady's maid or a mill-worker, a governess or governed, but having "old maid" and "unprotected female" written on her face and appearance, was almost crushed flat, as it was, by a great drunken brute of a well-dressed fellow, who, taking advantage of a lull, managed to get within, and, too far gone in drink to see, and too much occupied in swearing at John to look, sat down in the poor woman's lap, despite her piteous exclamations. The fellow, however, was at last ignominiously expelled, and they were left to themselves in peace. Marion Arnold had been greatly distressed by these repeated wranglings and altercations, and especially by this last brutal episode; and if she had been able to get out, and had known the way, would rather far have

walked to Grasaig than remained where she was. It required the united efforts of them all to re-assure her, and when the bugle sounded—for the bugle did sound in those days for this purpose—and the engine started with a succession of fiery snorts and puffs, and the train began to move with such an easy motion, and increased its speed so quickly, she became more calm. Fortunately, the night was too dark to know the tunnels from the open country, as they dashed along; and accustomed to spend hours in journeys of a few miles, it was with great astonishment that she heard that the lights they were so rapidly passing were those of Grasaig, and that the faint shimmering surface she could see over the house-tops was the sea, the Western Sea; and yet only that morning she had left the shores of the German Ocean.

On the arrival of the train at Grasaig, Ned was on the look-out. He had not told the Arnolds, but he had written to his sister Annie, and expected that she would be on the platform to meet them. Nor was he disappointed, for there stood both his mother and sister, come out to welcome

home the son, and not less to receive the stranger whom he spoke of so enthusiastically. Far better acquainted with this mode of travelling than most people at the time, they soon found out the party from Outchester, and ere many moments had passed, Marion Arnold, who had a little feared the meeting with them, was comforted by the presence and warm welcome of the ladies. John was as warmly welcomed, though not in such a demonstrative way; there was a lingering pressure in Annie's grasp, a flush rising rapidly to her brow, as she met him; but Marion she took into her arms, and kissed and petted like a sister. Contrary to John's purpose, moreover, they were all carried off in triumph by Mrs. Archbold, and nothing would please Annie but to keep the sweet simple Northumbrian till John could make proper arrangements for her reception. After a pleasant evening, therefore, they parted for the night; and Marion, instead of the cold lodging-house which she rather feared, was an inmate of the comfortable home, and a sharer of Annie Archbold's own room. It was indeed a mere transference from one

home to another, and as they sat by the fire by themselves, in spite of the strangeness and the newness of their acquaintance, they felt more as sisters who had been separated for a long period might have felt than as strangers till that night.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARION AND ANNIE.

MARION ARNOLD awoke with a start on the morning after her arrival at Grasaig. Her early country habits had prevailed, notwithstanding the fatigue of the long and unusual journey of the previous day; and long before Annie Archbold was conscious that the night was passed, Marion was awake, thinking of home. Quite amazed she was at first at the strange room, and circumstances in which she was placed; and then, as the dim smoky daylight of the town penetrated into the room, she collected her thoughts, only to permit them to wander away again, far from this finely-furnished apartment, from this pretty companion, whom she already liked — though standing rather in awe of Annie, it must be confessed,—to that old chamber in the

wall at Outchester, which she called her own, and to the dear ones there. Marion's eyes filled as she thought of the lack they would perceive in the household this morning,—of the want her mother would feel when she saw her chair empty, which many days would not remove,—how continually she would be missing her at every turn; and Marion, lying in that strange bed-chamber, wept quiet tears at the thought. She felt, however, that she must not indulge such thoughts as these, and, to shake herself clear of them, she rose, as softly as possible—not so quietly, however, but that she awoke Annie, who began to reproach herself for sleepyheadness, when she saw Marion already up and dressing; and then, humming the old song,—

“Up in the morning, na, na, na,
Up in the morning early,
I'd rather gae supperless to my bed,
Than rise i' the morning early.”

she followed the good example which Marion had set her.

Edward was waiting them when they entered the parlour; and when his mother made her appearance, and breakfast was on

the table, Annie began to show that, if Ned had been spared last night, it was more in consideration of the strange guest than from his own desert, and that his absence only made him the more obnoxious, because it had given a new direction to Annie's raillery.

"You're a very pretty fellow, aren't you now, Ned?" she began; "away for a whole fortnight, and leaving somebody behind you, who was very unwilling you should go, and yet you show how you value her kindness by never, either by letter or word of mouth, asking about Maggie Barnard. Now, what have you to say for yourself, Sir? How can you answer for such neglect?"

Edward, usually so careless and happy under the fire of Annie's artillery, even on this subject, appeared the very reverse this morning; his face flushed, and he looked, as he felt, very confused. Annie saw it in a moment, but could not, or rather would not, understand the cause; while Mrs. Archbold increased his confusion by saying,—

"Indeed, Edward dear, I was rather surprised myself at the omission. What

has caused you to forget or neglect your old playfellow?"

"Oh, nothing; I wasn't aware I had done so. Well, Annie, dear, how is she?—quite well, I fancy and hope?"

"Very cool indeed, I must say," Annie answered. "Did you take him much about, when he was in your country, Miss Marion?—but I needn't ask that, for you were all far kinder to him than such a careless fellow deserves; and we'll have enough to do to pull him down again, after the way your mother petted and spoiled him, I know."

"Ah!" Edward cried, as if on the watch to get away from the delicate ground on which his sister wished to lead him, "wouldn't you have liked to be spoiled in the same place and the same way, Annie, eh? I never enjoyed anything so much as that same spoiling. None of your paltry notions are entertained at Outchester, mother, dear; but everything is as large-hearted as dear Mrs. Arnold herself. Oh! you would like it vastly; but you see I got the first chance, Annie; mayhap, you may get one in time, too,—who knows?"

Annie's face flushed slightly, but she did for a moment stop her catechising; perhaps she thought it would be very pleasant to go to Outchester, and be petted and spoiled by John's mother; but she kept firm to her task, nevertheless.

"Well, but, Marion, you haven't answered my question; perhaps, because I didn't get time to put it correctly. Did this young gentleman go out—did you take him so much out among young ladies as was likely to make him forget his old friends, and somebody, too, among them? I should hardly think that Mrs. Arnold would approve of forgetting those that were left behind."

Marion, at first a little surprised at the tone and style of the conversation, began now to perceive that it was quite good-humoured and kindly, and so, with a smile, she said quietly,—

"I hardly know where young ladies could be found with us; but Mr. Edward did gang to some of the neighbour farmers with John and Frank. You were at West-hill, and Bowden, and Hytherlaw, I think, and there are girls at each of them, though

I scarcely ever see them, except it be at the meeting on Sundays."

"Yes, Miss Marion, I was at all these places, and very kind the people were at all of them; but the people and their kindness were only foils to set off the real, the sterling, which was Outchester itself. It would take me a week, mother, dear, if even Annie could keep silent so long, to tell you all the kindness of Mrs. Arnold, and all the wonders of Outchester."

"Well, you'd better begin now, at once," Annie said; "but, first, suppose you tell us about the young ladies at these places."

Annie was resolved to stick fast to her text, and Edward was just as desirous to get away from it. He was not at all anxious that Marion Arnold should think that there was somebody—a young lady, too—in Grasaig who had claims of any kind upon him; therefore he answered, blythely and cheerfully enough,—

"You'll get it all, bit by bit, and all in good time too. As for the young ladies, all I can say is, that I admired them very much, and the last seen always the most. They were all of them rosy,—sonsy lassies, I

think Mrs. Arnold called them — happy, cheerful girls, whose good looks and good health would frighten half of you town-bred girls into fits."

"Hush, Edward, dear," his mother said reprovingly. "Never mind him, Miss Marion, nor Annie either, for that matter: they ever lead a kind of cat and dog life when together. But still, Edward, I can't understand why you should so entirely have forgot Maggie Barnard."

"I didn't, mother," Edward said, more shortly than he usually spoke to his mother, then, correcting himself; "forgive me, but I thought I had made amends for my oversight, and tell me, how is she?"

"Quite well, and has been squired everywhere by one of the officers of the ship-of-war which is lying here. I shouldn't be surprised," Annie continued, "if she had been thinking as much about you as you seem to have done about her; so you'll be even in that, any way."

"Well, that is as it should be, according to your account."

But though Edward said this carelessly, he was very considerably piqued. Such is

the egotism and inconsistency of man. He did not think either that it was wonderful or improper that he should himself forget Maggie for the time, and she had no right to be angry with him if he did so; but that Maggie should so easily forget him was quite a different affair, and, at the moment, any way, he fancied quite unpardonable.

"Now, thou slave of a bell, it is time for thee to be gone. Have you ever, my dear Marion, seen any of your brothers in their working dress? I suppose you have. Isn't it a delectable one? I know you would like to see Ned. So, there's a good fellow, do make haste, and look in upon us before you go to the foundry."

"I saw them once in Newcastle," Marion answered, "and thought they looked very dirty and blackguard like; but I suppose it was only work-like, and as it should be. People should always be like their work."

"Hear, hear!" Edward cried, as he rose to leave the room; "thank you, Miss Marion. Work-like, and as they should be! When would you have hit upon the like of that expression, say now, Annie, there's a

dear girl? Why, it smacks of Outchester, pure air, and kindly sense all over."

"Better be off," said Annie, laughing, "or I shall take up the first part of the description, which is quite as true, specially when the week draws to an end. Go away, and dress yourself like a blackguard; do, now, there's a good boy."

Edward ran off. Let who might be in the right, he knew right well by experience that there was no chance of Annie letting him have the last word. When he was gone, Mrs. Archbold said to Marion,—

"Now, my dear, is there anything you would like particularly to do or to see to-day? Just do as you would at home. Tell me if you want anything; and Annie will only be too glad to go out with you, if you would like to see the town."

"You are very kind, much too kind," Marion answered. "I think that I should write my mother. I have never been away from her a day before in all my life, and it will please her, perhaps; but that I can do afterwards."

"No, no, my dear Marion; do that first. Write at once; you do not know how much

good your letter will do, and the very quickness of getting it is much, very much, also. It will please your mother more than anything, I am quite sure, but seeing your own sweet face again. Ring, Annie, dear, and get the table cleared."

The table was soon cleared, and Marion sat down to write her first letter home. Marion did not fear this work; it was not to her, as would have been the case with most girls of her age and breeding, a difficult task. She had been trained in correspondence with her brothers, and wrote easily enough; and, then, she had never written to her mother before, and had such a quantity of things to say—to tell her about the journey, and the house in which she now was, and the people—she felt able to fill sheet after sheet; and then the letter was so full in its every expression of love, of affection for all at home, that Mrs. Archbold judged quite correctly when she said it would be of so much importance and do her mother so much good. Marion did not fall into Edward's error, even though Mr. Johnson was not somebody to her, perhaps just because he was not, she

sent special remembrances, after the old-fashioned, kindly style, to him, as well as to others. Before long she had finished; but while she was busy, Annie, who had been on the watch lest Edward should slip out without presenting himself in his working garb, laid hold of him, and ushered him in with much ceremony, and cried,—

“Look now, Marion, dear; would you know him again? Isn’t he a very pretty figure? Does he not look a very nice young fellow? And remember the wretch is clean just now.”

But Edward Archbold, as his sister knew right well, none knew better, could bear a close inspection, let his garb be what it might—rough or fine, soiled or clean; and the flush on his cheek was caused by no sense of shame, but rather was produced by that feeling which every young man has felt who has been submitted for inspection to a pretty girl, about whose opinion of himself he does not feel indifferent. Edward stood the ordeal well for a time, and then ran away, laughing, and vowing vengeance on Annie, leaving the two girls together.

As soon as the letter was finished, Annie said,—

“I suppose you would like, Marion, to go out now, would you?”

“Very much; but my brother Frank will come; he is to go away to-night, and I would like to be with him as much as possible to-day.”

“Oh, of course; I thought of that too. We can see the best part of the town—we can go over it all, easily enough, it’s not so large—after he comes. We have nothing to show you hereaway, unless it be the river and the fine glimpses we can get of the hills in the Highlands on the other side.”

“Ay; but you forget, Miss Annie, that I’m only a country girl, and the things and places you consider poor may be—nay, are sure to be—very rich and novel to me. I hardly ever was in a shop even, but the little country merchant’s at Framlington.”

“Now, don’t you be foolish or stiff, like that; call me Annie downright, there’s a good girl. Well, this town’s not much of a place; still, you may like to see it, for all

that. You, who come from such an interesting country, will think this a very tame and poor one. I've never heard of a famous place within reach but Dumbarton Castle, though we've been here so long."

"Yes, our country is famous for many things, and there are places in it people come far to see; but battle-fields and old ruined Border castles, and we're proud to live among them, still, what are they all to the country now?—only a famous name, and that's all."

"A name! did you ever read 'Ivanhoe?' If you have, you may remember what Ivanhoe says to Rebecca about great war-like deeds—'Glory, maiden, glory! which gilds the sepulchre and embalms the name.' Now, are not your names embalmed in the very heart of the country's life and history?"

"Perhaps so—of the worst time for the country, any way. I am proud, I confess, of being a bairn of Outchester; but that is fully more for the sake of the present people than the fame of the place. I fancy that the folk care far more for the people at

present living there than for all the famous men and women tradition says once dwelt about it."

"I have no doubt of that at all. I'm sure Ned would be like any Knight of olden time, were the old Romans to rise, and attempt to reclaim possession — ready to do battle to the last for Mrs. Arnold and her household."

Marion smiled; she was gratified with this expression of Edward's feeling. It was quite true, though with plenty of romance latent in her nature, she was prouder of her home because it was theirs than because Roman legions, Saxon knechts, Danish vikingr, or Border mosstroopers had formerly possessed the old place at Outchester. Yet it was very pleasant to hear people far from home speak well of and be enthusiastic about such familiar places as Wark or Norham, Bamborough or Hetton, Etal or Fordham; or to hear them expatiate on the field of Flodden or of Percy's Cross; and Marion liked to read "Chevy Chase," and to hear the plaintive song of the "Flowers of the Forest a' wede away;" and she knew "Marmion"

almost by heart, and could have gone with shut eyes nearly to the little spring above Branxton, which people called the well of Sybil Grey; but she was not nearly so well read as Annie Archbold, and her daily cares at home had opened a field for her faculties which Anne knew not of, and which had given her mind a much more practical turn.

“Mr. Edward could not be more pleased with my mother than she was with him. She delights in the company of young people, and he was so frank and cheerful; besides, you have all been so kind to John that it was little we could do to show him how much we all felt it.”

“Kind to John indeed! Truly, as he says himself, all the kindness was on his side. But you see, my dear girl, we are not afraid of being indebted to your mother, to him, and to you all, for we urged Ned to go, both my mother and me.”

“And much pleasure he brought with him and caused. I know the people about the town will not forget him in a hurry. I don’t know how many of the old wives he didn’t take tea with; and the little things

even that can hardly walk, were telling him to come back soon."

"But you haven't told me yet whether you've read 'Ivanhoe;' if not, we must get it to-day. You'll be delighted with it."

"I've read but few such books. Novels very seldom find their way up among us. Many of the people object to them, but our minister does not; I shall be very glad to read it."

"Oh, you don't know; it's just like discovering a rare treasure to fall in with such a book as that for the first time. I don't believe you'll be able to go to bed, at least to sleep, till you've finished it."

"I'll try. I know little about it, but we country people—perhaps it is because we have not the chance to do otherwise—generally can sleep pretty well in all circumstances. Is it far to the Post-office? I would like to put this in myself."

"Oh, we can easily pass one; there is one at the end of the street. I suppose it is rather a difficult thing sometimes to get letters sent away in Northumberland?"

"It is in some places. Ever since Mr.

Johnson, our young priest, came to live at Outchester, we've sent a boy in the morning on the pony; it's only a good ride before breakfast; so we are pretty well off now."

"How far may it be?"

"Only about six miles. Before that time, we used to get our letters once or twice a-week, and many people in the country don't get them so often as that—only when there was a chance into the village."

"Dreadful! How ever do they stand that? I don't think I could, any how; the post is quite a necessity; one would feel the want of it, even for one day, terribly."

"Yes, I have no doubt you would; but when people have not been used to a thing they don't feel the want of it. Oh, here is Frank. I'm glad you've come; Miss Annie promises to go out with me, and show me the town, and we were waiting till you came."

"I'll wait now for you," he answered; "turn about's fair play, if you'll go and make ready. I know nothing of the town myself, and Miss Annie will perhaps take

pity on me, and permit me to go with you."

The girls went away most lovingly together, leaving Frank to his own thoughts, which were of a fair sweet face too, but not one of those who had just left the room.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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